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Interactive Guitar 74

REESE WYANS
IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

Jim Root

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH ONE HALF OF Slipknot's TERRIFYING GUITAR DUO.

JOHN PETRUCCI
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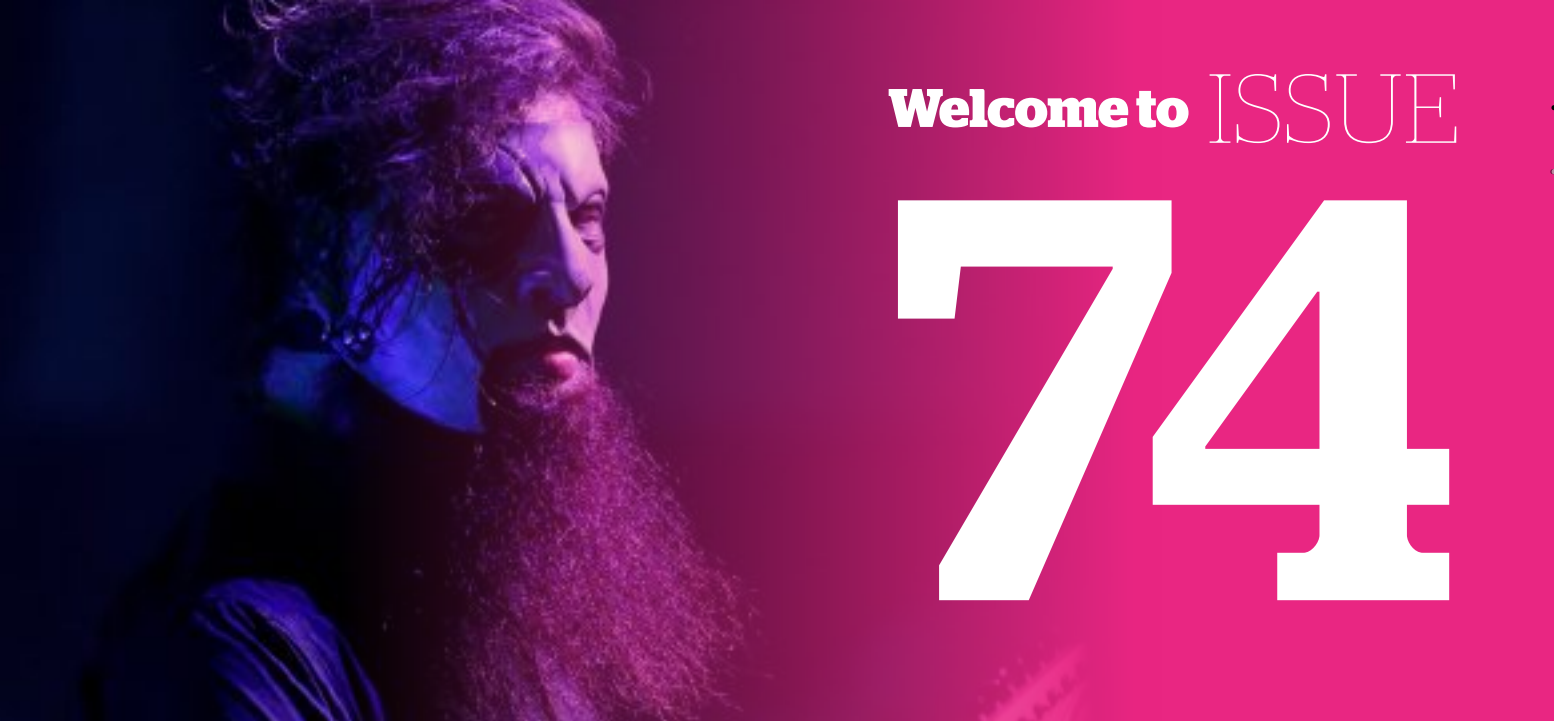
Rotosound's Alan Marcuson at Abbey Road studios with Pink Floyd while they were recording *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* in 1967. © Rotosound Archive



Hello and welcome to issue 74 of Guitar Interactive Magazine!

When Slipknot's self-titled debut was released to the masses during the dying days of the 20th century, it gave a shot in the arm to heavy metal music the likes of which only a handful of the greatest bands can equal. Twenty-one years, six albums and countless sold-out world tours later, and the group have evolved into chart-toppers, debuting at number one on both the US Billboard 200 and the UK Albums Chart with their latest release 'We Are Not Your Kind.' Guitar Interactive sits down for an exclusive interview with one half of the Slipknot's guitar double team, Jim Root.

Also in this issue, we talk with the man who's played with just about everyone who's anyone; including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Joe Bonamassa and Larry Carlton: Reese Wynans.

If that's not enough, as with every issue, we have a fantastic Tech Session from Nick Jennison as he looks at the immense guitar stylings of one of the most incredible guitar players to ever pick up the instrument: Dream Theater's John Petrucci.

As usual, with every issue, we have a whole host of the latest and best gear reviews from around the world of guitar, with our team of world-class gear reviewers offering their unique insight, expertise, and personality which as always, I hope you will enjoy However, if that's not enough, don't forget all of our exclusive lessons from Nick Jennison and Giorgio Serci.

Until next time, stay home when you can, and stay safe.

Guitar Interactive

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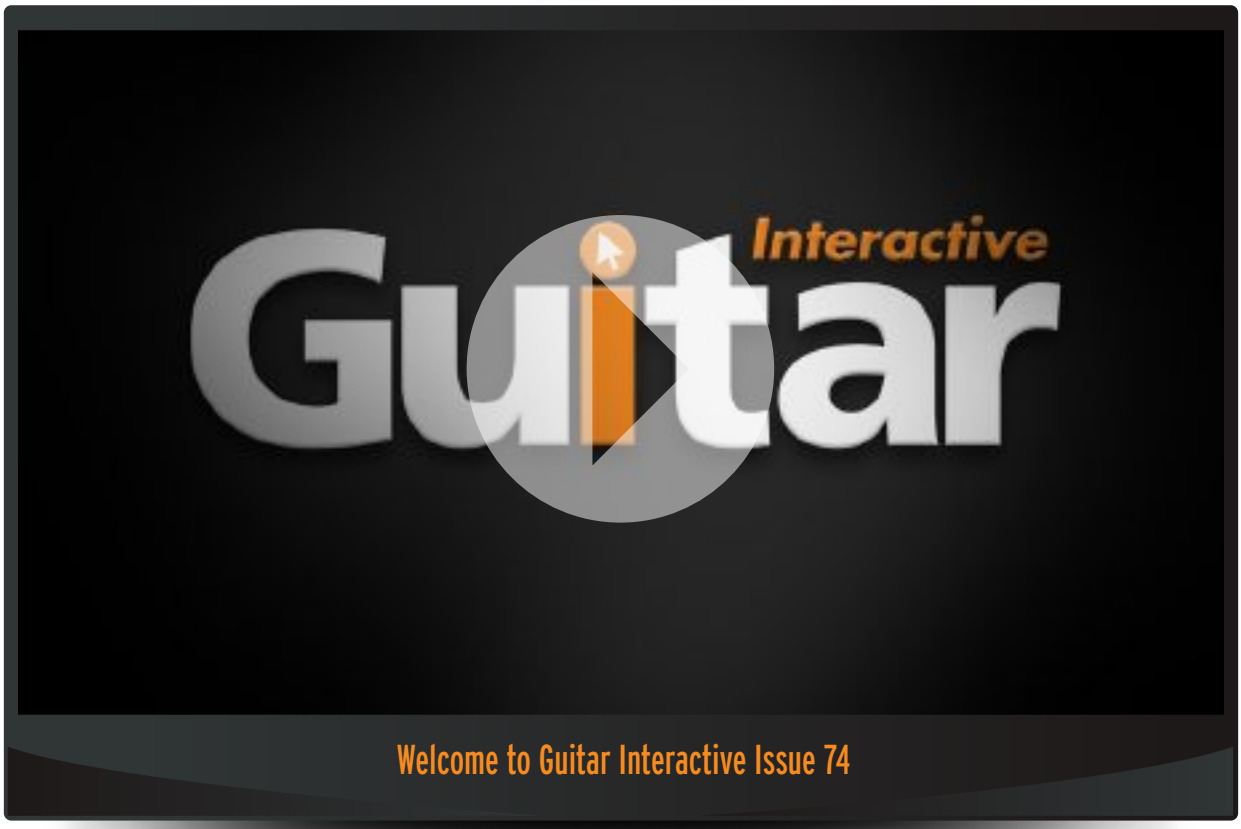

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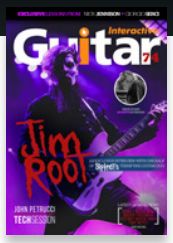

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Photo © Grzegorz Golębiowski

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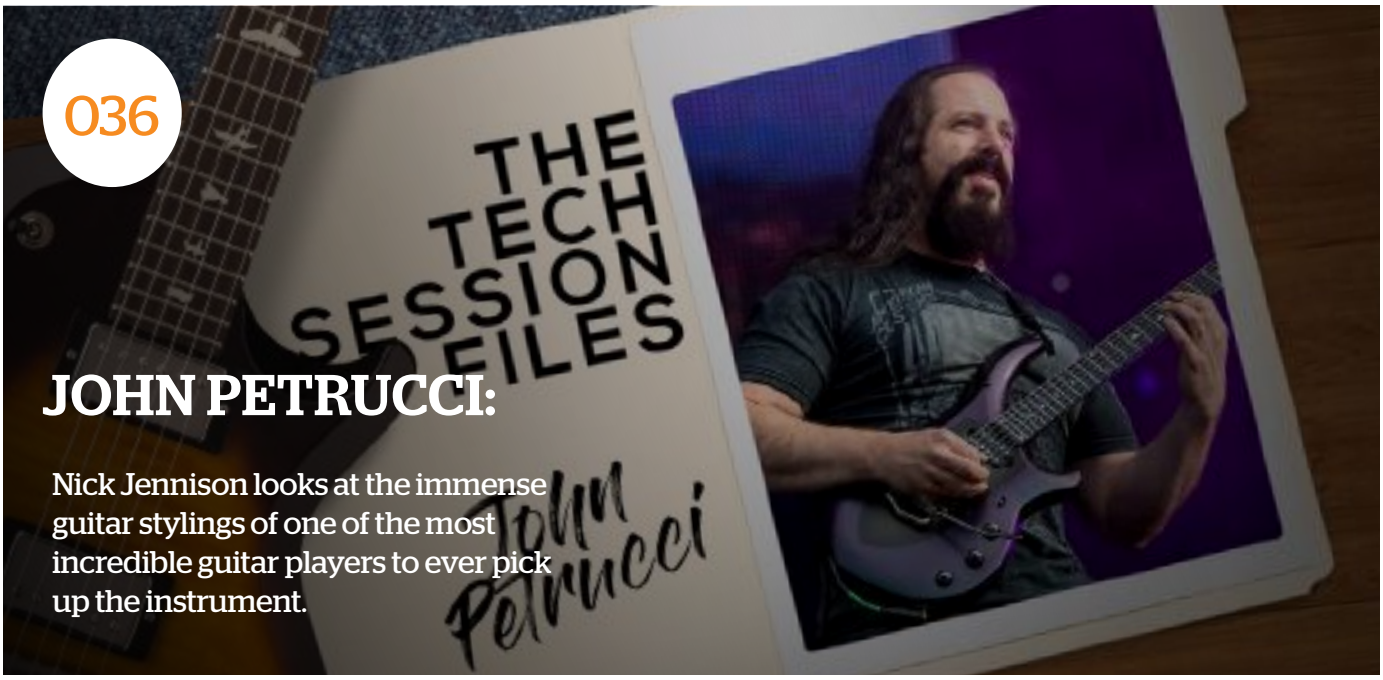

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Also in this issue, **Nick Jennison** talks with the man who's played with just about everyone who's anyone; including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Joe Bonamassa and Larry Carlton: Reese Wynans.

IN-DEPTH CHATS WITH GUITAR'S BIGGEST NAMES

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

JIM ROOT: THE ROOT OF EVOLUTION

When Slipknot's self-titled debut was released to the masses during the dying days of the 20th century, it gave a shot in the arm to heavy metal music the likes of which only a handful of the greatest bands can equal. Twenty-one years, six albums and countless sold-out world tours later, and the group have evolved into chart-toppers, debuting at number one on both the US Billboard 200 and the UK Albums Chart with their latest release 'We Are Not Your Kind.' **Jonathan Graham** sits down for an exclusive interview with one half of the Slipknot's guitar double team, Jim Root. »

Original Photo ©Alysse Gafkjen

THERE'S no question that Slipknot is one of the most important bands of the past two decades; they have the record sales, the fans, the shows and most importantly, the tracks to live up to the hype. And while there may be some traditional metal fans not as keen on the modern inclinations of Slipknot's music, no one can deny that the group has built a career of extreme success. Of course, this doesn't mean that the band has not had struggles and challenges along the way. In fact, their story is quite the opposite. Slipknot's continued defiance in the face of adversity coupled with a desire to experiment with their craft has made it particularly interesting to follow the band's progression, particularly in the last decade or so.

When we compare Slipknot's evolution throughout the years, they are a long way from the band that made that aggressive self-titled debut album back in 1999. Sure, subsequent gold and platinum efforts like 'Iowa' (2001) and 'Vol. 3: (The Subliminal Verses)' (2004) would firmly put them on the map as hard-hitting heavy metal heavyweights. However, 2008's "All Hope is Gone" ushered in a new era for the band in terms of melodic experimentation and songwriting, and it's clear that Jim Root has played a massive part in this development. Not only are Root's guitar stylings (along with Mick Thomson's) a massive element of Slipknot's sound, but also of Stone Sour's, who he was also a key member of along with vocalist for both acts: Corey Taylor. The evolution of his sonic choices can be directly connected to the band's musical shift to perhaps a much more mainstream approach, and in turn, creating Slipknot's status as one of the world's most famous and commercially successful metal groups.

> "**Slipknot has proven** that they can still maintain themselves as musically relevant and ambitious, while still forging new ground and not settling for that original pre-established sound that many would expect from them."

Tracks like "Sulfur" or «Psychosocial» continue to show the heaviest side of the band combined with the melodic approach that they developed in the mid-2000s, which could be viewed and considered as Slipknot›s definitive sound, but there is already a tendency in this album to go for softer and more melodic elements. This has been a running theme in every subsequent new release of the band›s career: sacrificing a bit of the dark and heavy elements in order to leave some space to inject more melodic approaches.

The reasoning for this can be traced back to Root's partnership with Taylor in Stone Sour. While Slipknot was becoming much more popular in the mid-2000s, Root and Taylor revived the band, which quickly started to »

YouTube

Slipknot - Unsainted [OFFICIAL VIDEO]

gain its own popularity and success. Stone Sour had at the time been defined and viewed by many as a more melodic and accessible version of Slipknot, with both musicians showing a much more eclectic approach to their songwriting skills and allowing themselves to explore new avenues as musicians.

We can hear this influence of Taylor and Root from their Stone Sour albums in tracks such as "Dead Memories" or «Snuff," where the band is extremely melodic, there are no extreme vocals, and it rarely sounds anything like the band that made the self-titled and 'Iowa' albums.

This was even more evident in the follow-up album, 2014's '5: The Gray Chapter,' with the band presenting two very marked halves in terms of overall sound: one heavy and dark, while the other is a lot lighter and melodic. Root's guitar playing has evolved in this regard too, with a lot more emphasis on punching in to add texture in key moments of the tracks as opposed to being a heavy force throughout the entire piece.

Don't get me wrong; Slipknot can be just as hard-hitting as ever. However, as the years go on, it's more and more evident that they are so much more than that.

2019's 'We Are Not Your Kind' is the latest landmark in the band›s career and perhaps Root›s most fascinating musical performance as a guitar player to date. If in previous releases they were bound to experiment a »

Jim Root Interview

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"We're not those people anymore. **We're not that band anymore.** That was a place in time; it was a snapshot of who we were at that time, and to try to recreate that, I think, would be contrived, and our fans would see right through it..."

bit here and there, this album shows the band trying many different musical directions while also going back to the hard, heavy and dark approach that made them so popular to begin with.

It's hard to determine what makes Slipknot the band they are these days. One can simply listen to their hits and get a very simple perception of who they are, but the reality is that if you listen to their albums as a whole, you get a whole tapestry of musical influences and a band that has grown and developed a lot throughout the years.

This is a testament to the value of experience, triumphs, tragedy, experimentation and even allowing the influence of other projects to take hold. No one can pretend that every change a band makes is inherently good because that simply isn't true. However, Slipknot has proven that they can still maintain themselves as musically relevant and ambitious by forging new ground and not settling for that original pre-established sound that many would expect from them.

Slipknot has grown from a heavy modern metal act to a very eclectic outfit, maintaining that unique dark aura, but becoming more melodic, complex and yet still accessible all at the same time. It sounds paradoxical, but in their world, it holds together perfectly.

"We're not those people anymore." Root states in reference to the band's debut and follow-up records. "We're not that band anymore. That was a place in time; it was a snapshot of who we were at that time, and to try to recreate that, I think, would be contrived, and our fans would see right through it… and even if it was a great, really heavy, aggressive, organic record like that, the »

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Slipknot - Solway Firth [OFFICIAL VIDEO]

comparison wouldn't match up to it. So I like to look at everything as an evolution."

So what comes next? Well, Slipknot is taking much longer between new releases these days so we will have to wait and see, but one thing seems to be a given from Jim Root and the Slipknot lads — it won't be exactly what you would expect from them.

Speaking of things of an unexpected nature — Slipknot was set to embark on the first-ever Knotfest at Sea festival later this month, with the likes of Anthrax, Behemoth, DevilDriver, Sevendust, Skindred, and Ho99o9 all joining Slipknot on board for an incredible live event. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, this event along with Knotfest UK and all other Slipknot live dates in 2020 will have to be shelved until further notice.

The masked metal band were also set to bring their Knotfest event to the UK for the very first time this August, with a performance scheduled for the legendary Milton Keynes' National Bowl.

"The band looks forward to performing for its fans again, and will do so when everyone's safety can be assured," the statement from their official Facebook page reads, going on to confirm that ticket holders will be contacted via email regarding refund options.

Corey Taylor recently stated that Slipknot had been in talks to perform a series of intimate "throwback" gigs. The musician made the comment while speaking about how the current situation is affecting the live music industry on the whole.

"These shows will probably be in smaller venues. Because people will be fucking scared, man," Taylor explained. "Or, maybe outdoor venues, where people don't feel like they're confined."

He added that there could "be a sense of paranoia for a while" over attending large events, "even after there is a medicine developed, or a vaccine."

Stay up to date with the latest Slipknot tour news and more at:

slipknot1.com

WE ARE NOT YOUR KIND
Slipknot

Slipknot's sixth studio album 'We Are Not Your Kind' is out now, and available to stream on all major platforms worldwide.

END «

Slipknot **'We Are Not Your Kind'** Tracklist:

1. INSERT COIN
2. UNSAINTED
3. BIRTH OF THE CRUEL
4. DEATH BECAUSE OF DEATH
5. NERO FORTE
6. CRITICAL DARLING
7. A LIAR'S FUNERAL
8. RED FLAG
9. WHAT'S NEXT
10. SPIDERS
11. ORPHAN
12. MY PAIN
13. NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD
14. SOLWAY FIRTH

For information on Slipknot, please visit: **slipknot1.com**

Reese Wynans

SWEET RELEASE

Reese Wynans is everywhere. Scan the history books and he's there on every page: a vital strand of rock 'n' roll DNA, present at a thousand cultural flashpoints. Over the last five decades, you might have found him cutting his teeth with the early nucleus of the Allman Brothers Band. Taking the stage with Boz Scaggs. Saving the '80s blues scene with Stevie Ray Vaughan's Double Trouble. Bringing the blues to the people with Joe Bonamassa. Adding his thumbprint on piano and B3 to the work of Larry Carlton, Delbert McClinton, Los Lonely Boys – and hundreds more. Nick Jennison talks with the man who's played with just about everyone who's anyone: Reese Wynans. »

Photo ©Ed Rode

DURING a celebrated career that recently saw him inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame, the one omission on Wynans' résumé was that this fabled keys man had never released a solo record – until now. Sweet Release is the album we always knew Wynans had up his sleeve: a glorious collision of stellar musicianship, classic material given fresh mojo and a glittering roll-call of star guests – including Keb' Mo', Kenny Wayne Shepherd, Warren Haynes and Bonamassa himself on production – that confirms the deep respect Wynans commands on the scene.

"This record is something I've had in my mind for a while," explains Wynans. "Joe said to me: 'What are you waiting for?' I didn't really have a good answer. These songs are windows back into different eras and different times of my career. It's a collection of the songs I've played with musicians in the past, and it shines a light on a couple of blues bands that I think need a little bit more recognition." »

Reese Wynans Interview

"This record is something I've had in my mind for a while," explains Wynans. "Joe said to me: **'What are you waiting for?'** I didn't really have a good answer..."

To play Sweet Release is to be led by the songs through Wynans' fascinating backstory. His roots in '50s Florida are given a tip of the hat in the form of two tracks by Tampa Red: the local blues legend whose piano-men, Thomas Dorsey and Big Maceo, would figure highly amongst Wynans' early influences. "I loved the tinkly old blues piano stuff," he remembers. "Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnnie Johnson with Chuck Berry – something about the piano always did it for me. When I got in my first band, The Prowlers, I bought an electric piano and I never thought about doing anything else. It was the way my brain worked. I wanted to play piano in a rock 'n' roll band."

So the die was cast. By the late-'60s, Wynans was playing alongside future blues-rock royalty in Florida up-and-comers, the Second Coming. "Dickey Betts was one of our guitar players and our bass player was Berry Oakley," he says. "We had a house gig at a club in Jacksonville, learning to jam and make more out of the blues, exploring the Hendrix and Cream catalogues. »

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Reese Wynans and Friends - Crossfire | Official Music Video

Duane Allman was in Muscle Shoals at the time and he heard about us, and would come down on a weekend and sit in with us. Duane ended up hiring Dickey and Berry and breaking the band up to form the Allman Brothers. But that's OK, y' know, because we went on to do other things. For Sweet Release, we covered the old Les Dudek song, Take The Time, which reminds me of being back in Jacksonville during the dawn of that Southern rock era."

Other songs salute the '70s, when the keys man could be found flanking Boz Scaggs as the rising songwriter established his reputation on the West Coast. For Wynans, one song in Scaggs' acclaimed catalogue shone brightest, and decades later, it gives Sweet Release its title track. "I thought it was a great song back then," he reflects, "and through the years, I've been waiting for people to cover Sweet Release. But no one ever did, so I suggested it for this album."

Of course, the Sweet Release tracklisting wouldn't be complete without a nod to the great Stevie Ray Vaughan. In 1985, Wynans' world changed forever when the iconic Texas bluesman drafted him into the Double Trouble band for the era-defining Soul To Soul and In Step albums. "It was unbelievable to play on a stage with those guys," he remembers. "I have to tell you that I hardly ever heard Stevie play a bad note. He was on his game every single night. It was daunting, because I had to step up every night as well. And of course, the Stevie songs on Sweet Release – Crossfire, Say What!, Riviera Paradise and Hard To Be – are our tribute to him."

In 1990, SRV's tragic death robbed the blues world of an all-time great and Wynans of a cherished friend. But the keys man bravely brushed himself down and walked on, soon becoming one of Nashville's most in-demand players with credits for headline acts »

YouTube

Reese Wynans ft Kenny Wayne Shepherd - Shape I'm In | Blues Alive At Sea | 28/02/2019

including Lee Roy Parnell, Brooks & Dunn and Hank Williams Jr. In 2015, the seed of Sweet Release was planted when post-millennial blues master Joe Bonamassa called up with a tantalising offer. "He wanted to do a series of shows at Red Rocks where we would feature the music of Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters," says Wynans. "And y' know, that's right up my alley. So things went on from there."

It was Bonamassa's encouragement that prompted Wynans to embark on Sweet Release. And though the guitarist was initially reticent about producing the album himself ("I had many personal doubts," he writes in the sleevenotes, "about taking on a responsibility as great as producing Reese Wynans' first solo album in his 50-year career"), he finally gave in to temptation. "I wanted this record to sound almost like a live band," says Wynans of the pair's shared vision for Sweet Release, "but I still wanted it to be relevant, with fidelity that's as good as the topical records that are out now. I was going to do more funky instrumentals, but Joe's idea was to do more vocals. He wanted me to take the first solo and have the light shone on me. He was wonderful in the studio. I would do a record again with him in a second."

Sweet Release feels like a musician coming home. Wynans was already a familiar face at Ocean Way: the Nashville studio where he'd previously added fairy-dust to endless tracks for other artists. And when sessions began for his own solo album, it was a joy to reconnect with the Double Trouble rhythm section of Tommy Shannon (bass) and Chris Layton (drums) – plus modern guitar great Kenny Wayne Shepherd – and lay down stinging contemporary takes of SRV gems like Crossfire and Say What!. "Everybody knew the songs," Wynans recalls. "There was hardly any need to even run through them – it was perfect right from the start, and we played each song three times at the max. There's a lot of people who play Stevie songs and try to sound like he used to. With Kenny Wayne, it's like he has the same DNA that Stevie had. He just wanted to rip it – and I just loved what he brought to it." »

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Nextone

Meanwhile, Bonamassa lent his own famed guitar skills to SRV moments like Riviera Paradise. "I'd always thought of that song as a movie soundtrack," considers Wynans of the In Step highlight, "so I wanted to do it with all the strings on it. And I wanted people to realise that it's OK to play that song, that it's not some untouchable song nobody should ever play. Joe's solo on Riviera Paradise was beautiful. His solo on Tampa Red's So Much Trouble was very fiery, too, and so was his vocal."

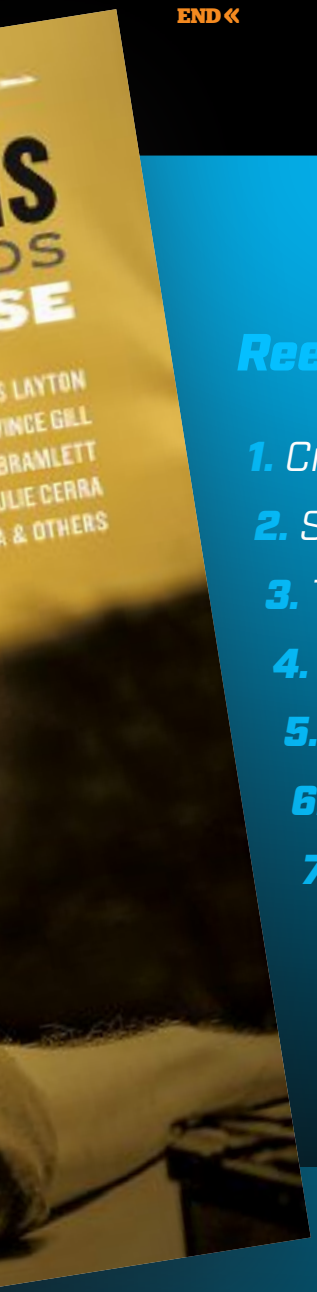
Elsewhere on the tracklisting, it's testament to Wynans' reputation that a starburst of special guests were eager to contribute. "Someone mentioned that the Crossfire bass riff kinda sounded like a Sam & Dave song," recalls Wynans, "so Joe thought of of getting Sam Moore to sing it. Getting Jimmy Hall and Bonnie Bramlett to sing on Hard To Be was my idea. I wanted it to be like a Delaney & Bonnie rave-up, so I called Bonnie, who I knew, and Jimmy, who I'd worked with before. Doyle Bramhall II was my first choice for the Otis Rush song, You're Killing My Love. As far as doing the Willie Mitchell song, That Driving Beat, my favourite singer just about in the entire world is Mike Farris – so I called him and asked him to come in and sing." »

"Of course, the Sweet Release tracklisting wouldn't be complete without a **nod to the great** Stevie Ray Vaughan..."

Perhaps most tantalising of all was the title track, which saw a procession of blues-scene titans stepping up to the mic. "Joe's idea for that was having one singer after another on the verses," says Wynans. "So he called Vince Gill, Warren Haynes and Keb' Mo' to sing. I thought the way that we played it had a little bit more of a Southern feel. That's my favourite song on the record."

Even on the year's most star-studded record, there's one name that shines brightest. For a full half-century, Reese Wynans has been the engine-room behind America's greatest roots music. Now, with Sweet Release, this modest legend has delivered the long-awaited solo album that puts his own name top of the bill and places his world-class talent in the spotlight. "I've never had an album out with my name on it before," he considers, "so I'm very excited. I'd like this record to make people feel happy and celebrate the music. Because that's what we were doing…"

END «



Reese Wynans 'Sweet Release' Tracklist:

1. Crossfire
2. Say What!
3. That Driving Beat
4. You're Killing My Love
5. Sweet Release
6. Shape I'm In
7. Hard To Be
8. Riviera Paradise
9. Take The Time
10. So Much Trouble
11. I've Got A Right To Be Blue
12. Soul Island
13. Blackbird

For more information on Reese Wynans please visit: **reesewynans.com**

THE Tech Session

In each issue, the Guitar Interactive Tech Session shines the spotlight o one of guitar's biggest icons. These in-depth lessons look to break down style, techniques and individual nuances that make these great players stand out from the crowd in the form of a tailor-made composition.

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UNDERSTANDING WHAT MAKES THE GREATS GREAT

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TECH SESSION

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PDF	BACKING TRACK
DOWNLOAD	DOWNLOAD

Tech Session

In this issue's Tech Session, **Nick Jennison** looks at the immense guitar stylings of one of the most incredible guitar players to ever pick up the instrument: Dream Theater's John Petrucci. »

[...>]

HAS there ever been a more important prog guitarist than John Petrucci? From his genre-defining work with Dream Theater to his hugely popular Ernie Ball/Music Man signature guitars, Petrucci's fingerprint is all over not just prog but the entire world of metal guitar. Petrucci's level of musical and technical accomplishment is the stuff of legend, and his playing has become the benchmark against which every up-and-coming shredder is measured.

Petrucci calls his influences "the Steves and the Als" (namely Steve Howe, Steve Vai, Steve Morse, Alex Lifeson, Al Di Meola and Allan Holdsworth). Still, his rhythm work owes as much to James Hetfield's ferocious riffing style as anyone else. It's undoubtedly this blend of crushing riffs and virtuosic lead work that is responsible for his ascendency to metal godhood. In this tech session, we're going to try and touch on all of these elements. But first, let's talk tone.

John Petrucci Tech Session Performance

[...>]

THE GEAR:

As multifaceted and complex as John Petrucci's playing style is, his approach to tone is very simple and refined. Petrucci mainly uses three core tones:

i) A high headroom, effects-laden clean

ii) A tight, dry and scooped rhythm tone

iii) A smooth and saturated lead tone

A long-time champion of Mesa/Boogie's Mark series of amps (which I myself am also a huge fan of), Petrucci's signature JP2C head has a channel for each of these jobs, but once upon a time it took a huge rack and at least three amp heads to achieve a setup like this. This "three core tones" approach is one many metal players use to this day, and we can thank John Petrucci for popularising it.

Interestingly, this tonal approach goes beyond the amp and effects and is actually hard-baked into Petrucci's guitars. Even back in his Ibanez JPM days, Petrucci favoured guitars loaded with two very different sounding humbuckers and a three-way toggle, yielding - you guessed it - three distinct tones:

i) Both pickups with coil splits for clean

ii) A tight and aggressive bridge pickup for rhythm

iii) An articulate and flutey neck pickup for lead

Yes, there's a pickup selection for each tone, and this is an approach that Petrucci almost never deviates from. What this means is that each pickup is designed for one specific job, and each selection almost sounds like picking up a different guitar!

For this tech session, I used a 2019 Monarchy Majesty (kindly loaned to us by Ernie Ball UK) loaded with DiMarzio Sonic Ecstasy humbuckers pretty much exactly as described above, along with the under-saddle piezo pickup for some of the cleaner parts. I plugged it into my old faithful '90s Mesa/Boogie Mark IV, using the "Rhythm 1" channel for cleans and "Lead" channel for both rhythm and leads - using a more aggressive scoop on the graphic eq for the rhythm tones.

One of the unique features of Mark series amps is the position of the tone stack. The treble, middle and bass controls are all pre-gain, meaning they affect your tone going into the amp's distortion - the opposite of almost every other high gain amp in the world. With this configuration, it's possible to roll the bass control all the way to zero to "tighten up" the distortion, then add back the lost low end using the graphic EQ. The result is a super fast and articulate sound that can be a little unnerving at first, but once you get used to it you'll notice how ac-

curately it tracks complex lines. If you don't have a Mark series amp, you can emulate this setup using an EQ pedal in front of your amp to roll off everything under around 100hz, and adding it back with the amp's bass control.

Petrucci does tend to boost his lead tones with an overdrive pedal, but the Majesty guitar I used comes with a built-in 20db boost that did a great job of adding some more saturation and compression to lead lines. I also flattened out the graphic EQ a little for the leads and added some more EQ and some reverb and delay in post.

With that, let's get stuck in!

John Petrucci Tech Session Lead Parts

[...>]

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BARS 1-8:

Kicking off with a clean passage, and of course, we're in odd time - 5/4, to be precise. Keep your foot tapping throughout this and you should be fine, but don't worry if you have to count 1-2-3-4-5 aloud - there's no rhythm section to keep you in time just yet. Try to keep the open strings ringing throughout.

BARS 9-15:

Switching quickly to a heavy rhythm sound on the bridge pickup, we have some wide-open chord stabs. These wide interval "stacked 5th" chords are very common in Petrucci's rhythm work because they don't get as "muddy" as close voiced chords with lots of distortion. The first one is an Esus2 (implying Em9), the second one is an A7/E. Be

John Petrucci Tech Session Rhythm Parts

careful with the timing of the stabs - the Esus2 stabs on beats 4 and 5, while the A7/E is one beat later on beats 5 and 1.

BAR 16:

Time for the first shred lick of the session, and it's a doozy - a blazing unison with the synth lead that uses the whole kitchen sink of techniques, and as if that wasn't bad enough it all happens over a time signature change! The initial legato phrase gives way to some slippery Steve Morse-inspired cross-picking that'll

challenge your pick hand control - use a shallow curved pick motion so that both strokes can clear the strings without too much-wasted motion.

It's followed by a sextuplet pattern that uses downward pick slanting to maintain the straight alternate picking that Petrucci is known for. For this, slightly supinate your hand so that alternate picking in a straight line makes the upstrokes rise above the strings without worrying too much about the downstrokes.

To be strictly authentic, you should switch to your neck pickup for this line, but if that's too much to handle (understandably), feel free to stay on the bridge pickup until you crack this lick.

BARS 17-25:

We're back with the chunky riffs, this time in 3/4 time. If you'd switched to your neck pickup for the previous line, you can chug the first three open E notes and quickly switch to the bridge pickup before the stretchy chords.

You'll need to be pretty deft with your palm muting to get the articulation right on these chords, but be careful not to "tighten up" too much - you'll need to stay loose for the deceptively challenging single-note unison line in bars 20 and 24. Nobody said this would be easy!

Another thing to be wary of is your fingering on the chords in this section. Usually, you'd use fingers 1 2 and 4 to

fret this kind of "Andy Summers" shape, but you'll need your 2nd finger to fret the low E string, so use 1 3 and 4 to fret the chords instead.

BARS: 26-40:

We're back to clean now - use the gap in bar 25 to switch pickups to the split middle position. These arpeggios aren't super challenging, but they do require some fairly large left-hand stretches, so be sure to warm up before you attempt them. A little gentle whammy bar vibrato will really make these arpeggios shine.

BARS 41-48:

Back to the high gain rhythm tone one last time for some punishing riffs in shifting time signatures - 5/4, with a bar of 3/4 nested in there for good measure. Play the high chords as "down-up" strums, but try to play the palm-muted low notes as "down down" for added percussiveness, and as ever, stay loose - there are some tricky single notes in bar 45, and the solo is coming up.

Speaking of which…

BAR 49:

Another unison line, this time with a 2-1-3 type line that'd be more commonly played with the economy picking, although to be authentic you should have a go at playing this using the same shallow curved alternate picking from bar 16. The final 9-note flurry is a series of hammer-ons for a more fluid sound, along with a slight ramp in tempo, so don't worry about being super strict with your timing on these 9 notes.

BARS 50-52:

A typical example of Petrucci's more melodic shred lines, inspired by Al Di Meola's fiery lead playing. Use alternate picking with a slight upward pick slant for the fast lick in bar 51 before switching to a shallow curved crosspicking movement for the pedal tone lick in bar 52.

BARS 53-57:

Some slippery Steve Vai-inspired sliding that's reminiscent of Under A Glass Moon - the timing is pretty tricky on this line, so spend some time listening to it before you try to play it. Once you get to the descending pull-offs, try to stay light - tension is the enemy with this stuff. Also, watch out for the 2/4 bar in bar 57. This is an example of the masterful way Petrucci phrases "through" time signature changes like this.

BARS 58-62:

An example of Petrucci's more "rock/blues" leanings with a howling harmony bend (give this some whammy bar vibrato) followed by some bluesy pen-

tatonic work. From here, we tear into a chromatic scale line that's taken straight rom Steve Morse's playbook (and also from Petrucci's legendary RHS video "Rock Discipline"). While this is strict alternate picking 16ths at 240bpm, it's actually not as tricky as you might think - use a downward pick slant so the upstrokes escape and you're good to go! The hardest part is probably the 4th finger bend at the end of this run.

BARS 63-66:

More tricky timing, but this time with some of the brutal alternate picked arpeggios that Petrucci is famous for. If you have to use legato to pull some of these licks off, don't worry - they're super tough, so cut yourself some slack!

BARS 67-70:

Ok, now we're into the really crazy stuff. These "Glass Prison" inspired alternate picked arpeggios are unquestionably the hardest thing in this tech session, so if you can master these you can consider yourself a very accomplished player indeed!

The first thing to be aware of is what your picking hand is doing - try to keep

John Petrucci Tech Session Gear

the same shallow curve that we've used for similar lines throughout this piece, but switch to downward pickslanting for the faster parts (it's just not possible to play these lines with both upstrokes and downstrokes escaping the strings!).

As if that wasn't enough to contend with, these arpeggios all happen over shifting time signatures - 7/4, 6/4, 7/4 and then back to 6/4 for the lead in to the next section, which is…

BARS 71-74:

… The ballad section! Inspired brazenly by "One Last Time", this is an example of Petrucci's melodic, sensitive side, and also a welcome break from the craziness of the rest of this solo. But that doesn't mean you should take it lightly. Focus on your vibrato and timing to wring every last bit of drama out of these simple lines before we launch into the ascending scale run that takes us into…

BARS 75-79:

More alternate picked arpeggios, this time in unison with the synth. If we're being strict, you should start each of these repeated 7-note figures with a different pick stroke, but I found it easier to keep time if I cheated a little and used a sweep to "reset" my picking pattern for each group of 7, but for maximum authenticity you're welcome to try strict alternate picking. Since the shape for each of these arpeggios is the same, once you've cracked the first one you should be good, with the real challenge being the timing.

That brings us to the end of a truly terrifying 3 minutes of guitar madness. Putting this together was no mean feat, but my goodness was it fun. If you've mastered this tech session, you can consider yourself a serious player indeed! Of course, as ever we've only scratched the surface of John Petrucci's masterful playing style and technique, but this should serve as a good jumping-off point for anyone looking to test their mettle against the high king of shred guitar. Good luck!

P.S. A huge thanks to Nicholas Hartley for his exemplary bass playing on this track!

END «

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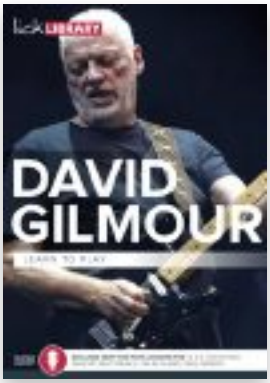

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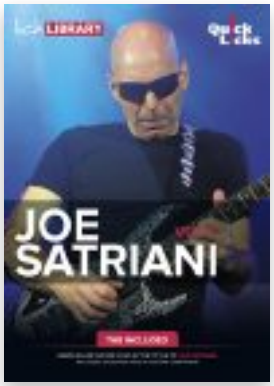

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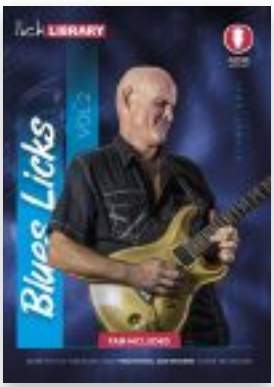

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THE Reviews

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GUITARS, AMPS AND EFFECTS

Music Man Majesty

As collaborations go, there are not many that live up to the success of Ernie Ball and John Petrucci's with regards to the Music Man Majesty...and with good reason. The sleek body shape utilizes a neck-through design to give you colossal sustain and killer tone. Couple that with premium tonewoods, DiMarzio pickups with an onboard piezo option, a tremolo bridge, custom switching, and you have a guitar that's ready to rock any stage–even if you can't quite play like John just yet. **Nick Jennison** reviews.

THE electric guitar is a design that has remained largely unchanged since the 1950s. On the one hand, if it ain't broken, why fix it? On the other hand, Lewis Hamilton didn't become a six-time F1 champion in a Benz Patent-Motorwagen. Equally, John Petrucci's genre-defining, boundary-pushing playing needs a state of the art instrument to match, and it's hard to imagine an instrument more suited to the job than his most recent signature guitar - the Majesty.

Sharing it's name with the band that would later become Dream Theater, the Majesty is the absolute apex of ergonomic and futuristic guitar design. Everything from the perfectly balanced body shape to the sweep of the control layout is designed from the ground up to fit Petrucci's body. If you're used to vintage Strats, Teles and Les Pauls, picking up a Majesty can feel positively alien: it's almost TOO comfortable. And then you start playing, and it all makes sense.

"Speaking of tones, **versatility** is the name of the game here..."

The 24 fret mahogany neck is wickedly thin and flat, and the polished ebony board and stainless steel frets feel like playing on glass. If you're looking for a bit of friction and fret grind, you won't find it here, but if your technique is on point then the Majesty is ready for whatever you can throw at it. The upper fret access is almost comically good, and actually quite revealing of how poor the access on most guitars is by comparison - despite there being no reason to, I still found myself instinctively tilting my hand to reach the top frets from years of playing "normal" guitars, and it actually freaked me out a little bit. The tremolo is similarly hyper-ergonomic, »

Music Man Majesty

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with a sensitive and fluttery response and a "palm rest" that feels really comfortable for both fast picking lines and chunky palm muting.

It's become a bit of a running joke how much I switch pickups mid-phrase, but switching ease is a real factor in how much I enjoy playing a guitar, and the Majesty excels here. The control layout, while being a lot more involved than most guitars, is a masterpiece of efficient design. In just two toggles and three pots, you have access to four magnetic pickup tones, piezo acoustic tones (either blended with the magnetic pickups or on it's own output), master volume, piezo volume, master tone and a 20db active boost. Every control is positioned on an arc that matches the natural movement of your forearm, and the pots are push-push instead of push-pull for even faster operation. Even switching multiple functions all at once takes a fraction of a second, which is crucial for a player like Petrucci.

Speaking of tones, versatility is the name of the game here. The updated DiMarzio Rainmaker and Dreamcatcher pickups are actually pretty different to each other, and moving from neck to bridge is almost like picking up a totally different guitar. »

Music Man Majesty Review

"The Music Man Majesty is **like a guitar** from the distant future..."

This jives with Petrucci's tonal philosophy of aggressive rhythms on the bridge pickup and fluid leads on the neck pickup - each pickup is perfectly tuned for it's "role". Don't expect a whole lot of vintage grit and character in either position, but it's a worthwhile trade off in exchange for some of the most articulate high gain tones you'll ever hear.

For cleaner work, you still have lots of options. The split middle position is clear and bell-like for the cleanest of clean passages, while the humbucking version of this position is great for mid-gain fusion tones. Then there's the piezo. Producing some really rather convincing plugged-in acoustic tones, the piezo can be used on it's own or blended with the magnetic pickups for an incredible, larger-than-life "metal" clean. You can even run it to a separate amplifier (or direct) using a TRS cable, allowing you to process the piezo and magnetic pickups separately.

The Music Man Majesty is like a guitar from the distant future. It's crazily ergonomic, ludicrously fast and excels at every extreme of the tonal spectrum. If you're an "edge of breakup" fan, or "Les Paul-into-a-Marshall" type player, you might find it a little cold, but if you're into the kind of heavy, technically demanding music Petrucci favours then the Majesty is the absolute top of the mountain.

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Ibanez Artcore AFS75T

Nick Jennison reviews the Ibanez Artcore AFS75T hollowbody electric guitar. Combining beautiful design and appointments at an affordable price; the AFS75T features a linden body finished in a gorgeous satin, a pair of Classic Elite Humbuckers and an ART-2 Roller bridge with Bigsby B60 that gives you all kinds of outstanding sustain and tremolo control.

I, LIKE so many guitarists who went to university to study jazz, have a special place in my heart for Ibanez's long standing Artcore line. These excellent yet affordable archtops were so many players' first „jazz box" - mine was an AF75 in Brown Sunburst, not that I was any good at jazz!

Of course, not all Hollowbody players are jazzers - there are just as many would-be Brian Setzers, Rich Robinsons and Ted Nugents out there who want a hollowbody they can rock out on, and Ibanez have them covered with the ASF75T.

Sporting the same outline as the highly respected AF75, you'd be forgiven for thinking the AFS75T is just a cosmetic upgrade, but the differences are more than just skin deep. The body is an inch thinner from-to-back for a more pronounced midrange punch and better feedback rejection, the neck sports 22 frets father than 20, and the trapeze tailpiece has been replaced with a licensed Bigsby B60 tremolo.

All of these changes add up to a guitar with a very distinct voice. It has that „airy" quality that a Bigsby tends to add to a guitar, but with a very pronounced midrange chime from the Classic Elite humbuckers. Stylistically, it's right at home in 50s rock & roll or grinding out 60s and 70s inspired classic rock riffs. The bridge pickup has plenty of bite and midrange push for crunchy tones, but it's still open enough for cleaner playing. By contrast, the neck pickup is thick and woody and can definitely hang in a jazz context, but is really well suited for rockabilly rhythm work and even neo-soul comping.

The slightly shallower body paired with a comfortably slim neck and tidy fretwork make for a very comfortable playing feel. The factory action was, in all honesty, fairly brutal, but a quick adjustment of the thumb screw to lower the bridge and we were in business. Complex chording felt effortless and even fast legato lines came out easily. »

Ibanez Artcore AFS75T

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That said, cranking the gain up at stage volume brought some howling feedback along with it, and you'd need to be a ninja with the volume knob to use anything more saturated than a plexi with this guitar - unless you're prepared to lean into the feedback and make music with it, in which case, rock on! In fact, some of the most fun I had with this guitar was through a thick and saturated fuzz. The honking, chiming midrange sounded killer through a wall of fuzzy goodness, and playing with the Bigsby to manipulate the wailing feedback is very addictive. »

Ibanez Artcore AFS75T

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"All in all, the Ibanez AFS75T **is a great choice** for someone looking for an archtop that leans more towards rock & roll than jazz..."

Speaking of the Bigsby, it's a very cool addition to a guitar in this price range. Licensed Bigsby units have something of a stigma attached to them, which in my opinion is completely undeserved. The unit on this guitar performed very well indeed, with no tuning issues (no doubt thanks to the roller bridge) and a very smooth action. If you've never played with a Bigsby before, you should know that it takes a lot of movement of the arm to create a relatively subtle pitch change, but that's a strength rather than a weakness, allowing for precise control of chord shimmers and single note vibrato. Don't expect „Eruption" style dive bombs, but there's plenty of travel for „Wicked Game" style scoops and dips.

All in all, the Ibanez AFS75T is a great choice for someone looking for an archtop that leans more towards rock & roll than jazz. It's punchy sounding, feels very comfortable and looks great. The Bigsby tremolo is a really cool feature, and for the price is pretty appealing too!

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Joe Doe by Vintage JDV001 Lucky Buck

Joe Doe Guitars and Vintage have collaborated to create a series of eight custom limited edition guitars that are hands down, like nothing you've ever seen before! Constructed using the highly regarded Vintage V6, V52 and V72 chassis, Ben Court, the originator of Joe Doe Guitars has applied his signature blend of art, design and tall storytelling to create guitars with a history, character and soul all of their own. **Tom Quayle** reviews the Joe Doe by Vintage JDV001 Lucky Buck.

JOE Doe Guitars are an incredibly interesting guitar design and customisation company run by Ben Court in Brighton, UK. Ben is a film and TV screenwriter by day while spending his nights and weekends producing custom guitar builds and designs that are totally unique thanks to a concept based on giving each guitar its own back story and associated character. These fictional entities and their stories give Ben's creations a sense of intrigue, warmth and almost comic book playfulness that you don't find with production line guitars, much more akin to the real world rock 'n' roll iconic guitars that we associate with our favourite players. These famous guitars have a history and story that makes them unique and interesting and it's this sense of story that Ben wants to instil into his own creations.

Ben uses high-end custom made bodies and Warmoth necks as blanks for his custom designs, and they have garnered lots of interest as both instruments and art pieces but come with a pretty hefty price tag due to the excellent components, design work and finish. In 2018, after a meeting with JHS owned Vintage Guitars (known for their superb 'bang for the buck' guitar range featuring Wilkinson hardware) the two companies decided to collaborate on a range of guitars that would »

> "Our review guitar is the 'Lucky Buck' – a **telecaster inspired** model owned by fictional country musician Leslie Coal..."

Joe Doe by Vintage JDV001 Lucky Buck

MSRP: (UK) £599 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Rock n roll heritage
- Country music/rockabilly
- Something unique

For more information, please visit: jhs.co.uk/brands/vintage/joe-doe-by-vintage

realise Ben's creative visions but at an affordable price point and the Joe Doe by Vintage range is the result of this collaboration.

Our review guitar is the 'Lucky Buck' – a telecaster inspired model owned by fictional country musician Leslie Coal. Leslie's backstory is a great riches to rags to riches again affair that absolutely imbues the guitar with life and this sense of intrigue, giving the guitar reason to exist rather than just being another guitar with a similar spec sheet to a hundred other guitars on the market. The 'Lucky Buck' is adorned with Lucky's signature inlay across the fretboard, a Cactus F-hole and floral scratch plate - all perfect additions to flesh out the feeling of this character and his story. Joe Doe even include custom designed 'case candy' with each guitar to give further life to each character, adding to the back story and sense of intrigue. It's a wonderful concept and, whilst it won't be for everyone, it's fantastic to see this kind of creativity and storytelling within what can, at times, be a bland, copycat market place.

As we've come to expect from a Vintage branded guitar, you get a lot of value for money with the Joe Doe by Vintage »

Joe Doe by Vintage JDV001 Lucky Buck Review

range. The Lucky Buck features a semi-hollow Alder, double bound body available in Black or Honeyburst gloss finishes.

The neck is a Hard Rock Maple affair with a Vintage Slim-C profile and Lignum Rosa fretboard sporting the incredible signature inlay, executed unbelievably well at the given price point. You get all Wilkinson hardware in the form of the WTB 3-saddle bridge, and WJ-55 EZ Lock machine heads, matched to 22 superbly finished medium vintage frets and a Graphtech nut. This ensures great intonation and tuning stability whilst the custom-designed high-output bridge single-coil and darker neck p90 provide wonderful, open sounding tones from the 3-way switch. Tones are definitely of the airy, country type but you can get mean rock and heavier tones from the bridge pickup giving the guitar far more versatility than the looks would suggest.

It's incredible what you're getting for the price here with playability, consistency and tone that should cost at least double the asking price, especially factoring in the deluxe hard case that the guitar ships in. Matching the creativity of storytelling and character creation with the equally creative endeavour of guitar design is a fantastic thing to see in this industry, made even better by the fact that these are great guitars in their own right and excellent value for money.

If you like a good back story, character depth and giving a guitar reason for being more than simple functionality, the Joe Doe by Vintage range will be right up your street. If you just want a great value, good looking guitar then this range is well worth checking out too. We've certainly been won over by Ben's creations both at the expensive and more affordable end of the spectrum.

END «

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6-String

7-String

8-String

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MULTI-VOICE PICKUPS FOR ELECTRIC GUITAR

Danelectro 59XT

Delivering both modern playability and classic aesthetics in one comfortable and high-quality electric guitar, the Danelectro 59XT is crafted with a semi-hollow body with a centre block, which provides the guitar with enhanced resonance and airiness. **Nick Jennison** takes a closer look at this new instant classic.

I WON'T lie, I'm a total sucker for retro guitar designs, and there are few manufacturers who do this sort of things as well as Danelectro. Maybe it's the association with my early heroes like Jimmy Page and Joe Perry, or perhaps it's the 50s stylings, but there's something about these guitars that fills me with joy. The 59XT is no exception.

Based on their classic "shorthorn" body design but with a few modern tweaks, the 59XT is still very much an "old school" guitar at heart. Employing composite plywood construction with a hollow body paired with a maple neck, it's a very resonant and lightweight instrument. There aren't any fancy figured "tonewoods" (an inflammatory term, I know), but that's really not what this kind of guitar is about.

Despite it's "catalogue guitar" looks, the 59XT has a comfortable neck, excellent fretwork and a nice low action, and plays really well - up to the 14th fret anyway. That's where the frankly enormous heel joint starts. If you've got any pretensions of getting your thumb around the neck at the dusty end, forget it! To compound things even further, that's where the strap pin is located, further impeding upper fret access. But here's the thing… it doesn't feel like it matters. This isn't a guitar for shredding histrionics. It's for surf, slide, garage rock, fuzzed-out riffing and all manner of organic »

"Another **really cool feature** is the aluminium pickguard..."

Danelectro 59XT

MSRP: (UK) £574 / (US) $549

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

Studio — Stadium

For fans of

- Retro stylings
- Unusual and interesting tones
- Taking the path less travelled

For more information, please visit:
danelectro.com/

goodness. (That said, the midrange "clank" of the bridge pickup makes it surprisingly good for dent!)

The "X" in the guitar's name refers to the pickup configuration, while the "T" denotes the exceptionally good Wilkinson tremolo - one of my absolute favourite trems ever created. It's super smooth with the kind of fluttery sensitivity you'd expect from a Floyd Rose, but without any of the downsides. The pickups are a very interesting combination of a humbucker sized P90 in the neck and a pair of lipstick single coils working together »

"The Danelectro 59XT is a **very cool looking** and great sounding guitar..."

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For a travelling guitarist, it's a lifesaver."

Nick Jennison
Guitarist and iGuitar contributor

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"Go in **with an open mind**, and you'll b

as a bridge humbucker - both irreverently angled in different directions.

The neck pickup is the star of the show for me and sounds wonderfully throaty and clear both clean and with a lot of gain, but the bridge pickup offers some really unique and cool tones that you'll struggle to find elsewhere. With the coil-split engaged, the sound is wiry and bright with the kind of transient attack t
but with both coils engag
tone that sounds great wi
have to be careful with h
bridge pickup is slightly
that more aggressive wax
high-end character, so it's

be richly rewarded..."

hat you only get from a lipstick, ged you get a fat and grinding th a bit of gain dialled in. You do ow much gain you use because the microphonic, but I'd be concerned potting could dampen some of the s a tradeoff I'm happy to make.

The Danelectro 59XT is a very cool looking and great sounding guitar that's as much fun to play as it is to look at. It has a number of "quirks" that might be considered "flaws" in another guitar, but on the 59XT they seem to add to the experience. Go in with an open mind, and you'll be richly rewarded.

END «

Danelectro 59XT

Victory V4 The Duchess

Nick Jennison reviews the Victory V4 The Duchess. Partnering a V4 Series all-valve preamp with a solid-state, 180-watt Class D power amp; The Duchess V4 is ultra-compact in size making it perfect for home and studio players as well as touring musicians who need a great sounding, dependable pedal platform amp.

DUCHESS family of amps are some of the most popular "clean platform" amps in the world. With notable users including James Bay, Joey Landreth, Ariel Posen and GI's own Phil Short and Chris Buck, along with legions of blues/soul/roots players, pedal users and working pros. Part of what makes these amps so beloved is how well they take pedals, and the V4 Duchess represents the natural evolution of this: it's a Duchess amp that will fit on your pedalboard.

Weighing in at 1.7kg (or if you prefer, a little less than 3 Tube Screamers) and a footprint that's similar Victory's highly acclaimed V4 series of preamps, the V4 Duchess is easily the most portable amp in Victory's already famously travel-friendly range. It's also the most powerful amp they offer, boasting a crushing 180w of solid-state power (when running into a 4-ohm cab).

For a touring musician like myself, this is a game-changer. Travelling with a conventional amp head is laborious at best, and frequently not even an option (for fly dates, overseas touring, or in large cities where taking public transport to the gig is more common than you might think). Trust me when I say, it doesn't matter how good your pedals are - if the hired/house backline sucks, no combination of Klons, Kings Of Tone or Strymons is going to improve things. The V4 Duchess totally remedies this, since it'll fit in your gig bag or carry-on luggage and barely tip the scale.

It's also a great way to expand your rig if you've ever fancied trying stereo or wet/dry but the prospect of hauling a second heavy amplifier to the gig puts you off. If you're concerned about volume, don't be - I tried the V4 Duchess as the second amp in a stereo setup through a pair of 16ohm 4x12s, and the V4 Duchess was easily able to hang with my 100w Super Kraken up to brutal decibel levels, despite "only" putting out 45w into 16 ohms.

There are some additional benefits to a solid-state power section besides volume and weight though. Firstly, the response is fairly linear, meaning you get the same amount of compression and sag at any volume level - it won't fall apart at high volumes, and it won't sound anaemic at low volumes. Secondly, »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Victory V4 The Duchess

MSRP: (UK) £699 / (US) $799

The Breakdown

Vintage	Modern
Specialised	Versatile
Straightforward	Feature-Rich
Traditional	Innovative

For fans of

- Amazing clean and breakup tones
- "Pedal platform" amps
- Surviving upstairs load-ins

For more information, please visit: **victoryamps.com**

"A **very cool addition** is the Power Level dial, allowing users to dial the output power from zero to 50w and anywhere in between..."

Victory V4 The Duchess

and perhaps more interestingly, the V4 Duchess and happily run without a speaker load. This means you can plug the line output straight into your audio interface, load up your favourite IR and record killer tones in silence.

Speaking of killer tones, all of this versatility, portability and power is worthless without great tones, and the V4 Duchess really delivers here. In a direct comparison with a V40, the V4 Duchess sounds remarkably close to its big sister. There's a little less power amp sag and more punch, but that's about it! The warm, full cleans and classy breakup are there in spades, and the onboard reverb and tremolo are very musical. »

When it came to pedals, I tried very hard to "upset" the V4 Duchess, but it lapped up everything I threw at it. Mid heavy Tube Screamers stay articulate and clear, but flat-EQ distortions and scratchy fuzzes sound full and rounded. Running a V4 Countess preamp in the 4-cable method gave me a three-channel, 180w amp with reverb and tremolo, fits on a Pedaltrain JR with room to spare, and the board will still weigh less than the hard case it comes in. It's nuts.

The V4 Duchess packs all the tone of it's bigger sisters into an unbelievably portable format, while still offering more power than you'll ever need. Paired with your favourite drive pedals or one of Victory's V4 preamps and you can have any tone you'll ever need in a package that you can take anywhere in the world. I can see this little amp becoming very, very popular indeed.

END«

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25TH ANNIVERSARY

Dover's DA-50 and DA-20

Dover describes their work as a "result of an obsessive pursuit of tonal perfection," and from what we've heard so far, that hard work has indeed paid off. Following on from his review of the DA-20CE in the last issue of Gi, **Tom Quayle** takes a look at two more models in the Dover range packed with creamy, chiming cleans tones and aggressive, all valve-driven overdrive: Dover's DA-50 and DA-20.

IN THE last issue we checked out the Dover DA-20CE, and we're hugely impressed with the boutique, versatile, pedal platform tones on offer from this new, high-end British amp manufacturer. For this issue Dover is back again with two amps sporting a much more modern, high gain take on the British tone.

The flagship DA-50 is a large format 50w head voiced with a quartet of ECC83 preamp valves and a pair of EL34s in the power stage, whilst the smaller DA-20 head takes a similar approach, but with two EL84s in the power stage for its 20w power rating. Both amps are based around a 2-channel design but differ in their implementation of the channels in terms of sonic territory and aims.

DOVER DA-50

The DA-50 is, in some ways, the simpler of the two with a pair of identical channels each with independent gain and master controls with a single purpose in mind – giving you access to Dover's idea of the best, modern high gain sounds on the market. Sure, both channels can offer you relatively clean and edge of break up tones at the lower gain settings, but this amp is really designed to chug, and it does so with incredible authority and tonal excellence. The two channels share a three-band EQ in the preamp and Presence and Depth controls for the power stage, giving you added bite and low-end thump as required. A switchable pre-gain boost can be engaged for the selected channel, offering incredible amounts of modern gain at the upper ends of the dial and both channel selection and boost can be operated by front panel switches or via a foot switch.

This setup allows the DA-50 to be much more versatile than you might expect and effectively operate almost like a 4-channel amp. You can set Channel 1 as a clean or edge of breakup tone and then boost it for a crunch, whilst channel two can be setup with more gain as a heavy rhythm tone that can be boosted for saturated leads. The cleans are not quite as dynamic and pedal-friendly as the boutique voiced DA-20CE, but they are way better than most other high-gain amps on the market and backing off the volume control on your guitar cleans even saturated sounds up nicely.

This is a much more dynamic and expressive amp than you might imagine, given the intended tonal purpose. It's also exceptionally loud, even in »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Dover DA-50 and DA-20

MSRP: (DA-50) £1599 / (DA-20) £1149

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

Studio — Stadium

For fans of

- Boutique modern amps
- High-gain tones
- Value for money

For more information, please visit:
doveramplification.co.uk

"Its smaller sibling, the DA-20 is also a 2-channel, **high gain beast** but in a smaller, all metal head shell and slightly different configuration..."

Dover DA-50 and DA-20

DOVER DA-20

half-power mode so will suit even the loudest heavy bands out there. A high quality, transparent FX loop and external power tube biasing points also add to the pro, boutique feel of this amp and thanks to the company's UK location (at least for the UK and European customers), the price point is incredible given the tones and exceptional build quality and materials on offer.

Its smaller sibling, the DA-20 is also a 2-channel, high gain beast but in a smaller, all metal head shell and slightly different configuration. Channel one is a dedicated clean/crunch channel with a push/pull gain knob to select between clean and low to medium gain crunch tones. The second overdrive channel is where the Dover high-gain magic happens and it has a similar voicing to the higher gain settings on the DA-50, with more than enough gain to satisfy even the most hardcore Djent fans. Both channels have the same shared EQ design from the DA-50 with an overall presence control, but there is »

no depth control here. There is also no switchable boost on the DA-20, but you can achieve similar results with a Tube Screamer or boost pedal in the front of the amp.

Like its bigger brother, the DA-20 has a low power output mode for smaller venues and home/studio use. Still, it's more than loud enough for large venues in full power mode and has plenty of clean headroom thanks to the dedicated clean channel, and independent master volume controls for each channel. You also get the same high-quality FX loop and external biasing points from the DA-50 to sweeten the deal. Both amps sound exceptional with a wide variety of modern British tones from sparkling cleans to incredibly saturated lead, and rhythm sounds with a ton of low end regardless of which amp you go for. The DA-50 is obviously the more chunky sounding of the two thanks to the extra thump provided by the EL34 power section, but the DA-20 is no slouch in that department either and should provide plenty of trouser flapping action through a good 4x12 or oversized 2x12 cab.

Both amps feature superb, handmade build quality using high-end materials such as Sheffield Steel, environmentally sustainable wood sources and military-grade electronic components. As such, they feel as good as they sound and are priced in a very refreshing way given the cost of other similarly spec'd boutique or handmade amps in this category. Neither will break the bank considering what's on offer here and are a superb way to get phenomenal tones in your arsenal without sacrificing build quality, components or features—highly recommended!

END«

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Friedman Gold 72 Wah Pedal

Every guitarist needs a great wah pedal. But just like one's "wah face," each player's wah preferences are equally unique. Dave Friedman knows this as well as anyone, which is why his Gold-72 wah pedal gives you a ton of customization options not usually associated with your average wah. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

THERE'S something about a great wah that's hard to beat. While it's easy to laugh these deceptively simple pedals off as one-trick ponies, I'd argue there's no single pedal that connects the player more personally to the sound it makes than a wah, because you're controlling the sound yourself with your foot (well, I assume you're using your foot - unless you're being really experimental!). Besides, nobody ever made a "modulated delay" face…

Friedman's Gold-72 "No More Tears" wah, like the majority of their modded-Marshall-inspired amp designs, harkens back to a golden era in rock guitar where the likes of Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads and George Lynch ruled the roost. Like so many of Dave Friedman's designs, it serves up classic, time-tested tones with modern build quality and reliability.

Build quality, weight and feel are important qualities in any pedal, but in a wah these qualities are make-or-break. Under the foot, the Gold-72 feels very positive, with an even tension across the sweep and the right amount of weight to keep the pedal planted during more histrionic moments. I'm a pretty large human, so I tend to prefer a stiffer treadle feel, and this was easy to achieve with the tension adjustment screw.

Tonally, the Gold-72 is very much a "classic" sounding wah, with a fairly narrow Q and a pronounced resonant peak in all three "sweep" positions. The outer two positions of the sweep switch are notably »

Like so many of Dave Friedman's designs, it serves up **classic, time-tested tones** with modern build quality and reliability..."

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Friedman Gold 72 Wah Pedal

MSRP: (UK) £169 / (US) $169

The Breakdown

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

Straightforward — Feature-rich

Traditional — Innovative

For fans of

- Classic rock
- Blues and funk tones
- Not having your tone degraded

For more information, please visit:
friedmanamplification.com

thicker sounding than the centre, but every setting has a ton of "quack" that's great for car chase funk or Clapton-esque rhythmic rocking. Despite its name, I didn't find any position of the sweep switch to be broad and aggressive enough for Zakk Wylde or Mark Tremonti-inspired tones, but for weeping lead lines, Hendrix-like vocal vibes and Schenker-esque nasal tones in a cocked position, the Gold-72 is excellent.

The simple feature set is actually a bit of a blessing in my opinion, with the only internal switch being a "buffered bypass/true bypass" toggle and the aforementioned sweep switch tucked away under the toe of the treadle. This makes it near-impossible to knock the switch while you're playing, but it does mean you might get grease on your fingers when you change settings if you touch the treadle by accident. Both bypass states sound totally transparent, with none of the "tone suck" exhibited by older wah pedal designs. Unless you're using a very sensitive germanium fuzz/treble booster after your wah, I can't see much reason not to leave the buffer on, but it's nice to have the option.

The Friedman Gold-72 wah is everything you could want in a classic-voiced wah, especially if you lean more towards rock/blues styles. It feels great under the foot, sounds killer and addresses the problems that plague older designs without fundamentally changing the recipe.

END «

Friedman Gold 72 Wah Pedal

ECLIPSE '87 NT
M-I CUSTOM '87
ECLIPSE '87
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Mooer GE300 Lite

Sam Bell reviews the GE300 Lite by Mooer. Billed as the ultimate portable guitar station for any guitarist, whether in the studio or on the stage and featuring 108 digital amp models based on Mooer's non-linear amp modelling technology, 43 factory cab sims, full-featured IR loader, and a full complement of classic and modern effects, the GE300 Lite gives you the best of Mooer in a new compact package.

MOOER is quickly leading their way to creating some of the most affordable Guitar effects units on the market. Starting with their vast range of micro pedals all the way through to their multi-effects and amp modelling unit the GE300. In this review, I had a chance to check out the latest offering from Mooer, the GE300 Lite, which is technically very similar to the standard GE300, except its smaller. How much smaller? Well, I

can legitimately fit it in my gig bag, from the starting gate this unit is going to be very popular with travelling musicians needing all their sounds on the go.

The GE300 Lite features 108 Amp Models, 43 IR based Factory Cab Sims (also the ability to load up to your own Impulse Responses onto the unit), 13 effects block per patch, up to 255 patches which can be controlled via 3 control switches. There are also 164 high-quality effects, which can easily be accessed for in-depth parameter editing. There is also a TONE CAPTURE feature which allows you to capture your favourite amp, guitar or effects sounds. And if that's not enough, its got a fully functional Looping feature within each pre-set for easy looping and practice.

The unit has a quality array of in›s and out›s as expected from a modern modelling/effects unit, stereo XLR and ¼ Inch Jack out, FX Loop (so you can integrate your own pedals alongside the unit and control them in the patch. There are also two expression pedal inputs to expand on the three control switches that you already have access to. The expression pedal inputs allow further control of Wah, Volume and effects parameters, further expanding this already packed full of features unit!

Navigating the GE300 LITE is super simple, each effect block (including Amp, Cab, EQ etc) can be accessed with their own individual switch, making the blocks easily accessible on the go. Then the parameters of each block can be manipulated via 5 sturdy parameter knobs and the main selector knob. The depth of each effect/block's parameters is definitely in-depth, there's so much to go at with just the amp modelling and CAB simulations alone, including the ability to change the Power Amp Valves/Saturation of Amp Models or moving two different mic placements on any given cab. »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Mooer GE300 Lite

MSRP: (UK) £529 / (US) $549

The Breakdown

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-end

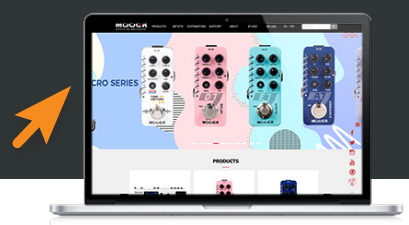
Straightforward — Feature-rich

Traditional — Innovative High-end

For fans of

- Chimy clean and edge of breakup tones
- AC30's without the budget required
- Do-it-all amps

For more information, please visit: **mooeraudio.com**



The amp models and cabs themselves sound great; they feel as real as you can get, they are all based on well-loved classic and modern amps. The amp models also boast some particular amps that are rarely seen on other amp modelling units, of course the names have been changed for legal reasons, but it's very easy to find the specific amps you may be looking for. Everything from warm and crisp clean amps to full metal and everything in between, the GE300lite has it.

The effects pedals within the unit are extensive, there is a lush range of Reverb's and Delays, and Moore's own signature synth emulations. Each of these of course just like the amps and cabs are easily edited, featuring lots of easily accessed parameters that give you further tonal flexibility. There's also a range of boosts, drives, compressors, EQ's, a healthy amount of Modulation style effects and much more.

The presentation and build of the unit is quality, and the screen makes for easy navigation, nice and clear for onstage use. The build feels very sturdy and like I've already mentioned it's a very small unit (hence the 'LITE') It has everything its bigger brother has, except for an expression pedal. I think this unit is certainly worth a look for the discerning travelling guitarist looking to keep their tone close to them at all times. Go check it out!

END «

"There's also a range of boosts, drives, compressors, EQ's, a healthy amount of Modulation style effects **and much more**..."

Mooer GE300 Lite

Studio to Sta

At **Guitar Interactive**, we pride ourselves on bringing you in-depth reviews and demonstrations for only the best products the world of guitar and audio electronics has to offer.

If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

PLAY IT - RECORD IT - PERFORM IT

Two Notes Torpedo Captor

Two Notes is the industry-leader when it comes to guitar cabinet emulatio
range of studio-grade products is just about essential for any professional
Captor X; a compact reactive load box, tube amp attenuator, miked cab sim
home, live and studio use. Sounds like another must-have? **Tom Quayle** g

OVER last few years a totally new category of guitar related product has entered the market allowing guitarists to utilise their beloved tube amps at sensible volumes with the added flexibility of digital cabinet and microphone modelling and DSP effects for recording and live use. These 'smart' reactive load boxes, such as Universal Audio's OX and Boss' Waza Tube Amp Expander, have proved massively popular thanks to a ton of useful features for both live and stu-

r X

on and guitar cab impulse responses. Their
guitarist. Now they back with the Torpedo
mulator, IR loader and stereo expander for
gives us the full breakdown.

dio work, but these market leading products are really large and heavy, very expensive and have features that are potentially overkill for the most guitarists.

Two Notes Audio Engineering's Torpedo Captor X is the newest 'smart' reactive load box, fitting into this product segment in a very interesting and unique place. It offers the bulk of the meaningful feature set from the previously mentioned products but in a far more compact and affordable package with no compromises to build or sound quality, even throwing in some unique skills of its own to differentiate it further from the competition.

At it's heart the Torpedo Captor X is a high quality 100w 8ohm reactive load box and attenuator. Being a reactive load, it provides your tube amp with a much more accurate and true playing response compared to plugging into a fixed load, so you can attenuate your amp's output without compromising the playing or tonal experience. There are three levels of attenuation available taking your amp from stage volume to whisper quiet as required. Built into the compact metal chassis you will also find a high powered DSP unit offering up virtual cabinet and mic technology, »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Two Notes Torpedo Captor X

MSRP: (UK) £469 / (US) $549

The Breakdown

Straightforward — Feature-Rich

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-End

Studio — Stage

For fans of

- Tube amps
- Value for money
- Reactive Load Boxes

For more information, please visit:
two-notes.com

an impulse response loader and high quality EQ, enhancer, stereo reverb and simulated twin tracker effects. Cramming all of this technology into a device roughly one third the size of and significantly more light weight than either the Universal Audio Ox or Boss Waze TAE is no mean feat.

Unlike the UA Ox, which only has line level jack outputs, Two Notes provide balanced stereo XLR outs for connection to professional recording equipment or a PA. There is a headphone jack on the front panel with USB and midi connections (of the mini TRS variety – with the appropriate adapter included in the box) around the back, allowing users remote control over preset switching and editing from either a computer or mobile device via Bluetooth, USB or a midi switching device such as the GigRig G2 or Boss ES8.

The remote control software, Torpedo Remote, is free to download on all devices and offers a very intuitive and attractive user interface for selecting and positioning of a vast selection of mics and cabs, EQing, adding ambient reverb or room simulation and enhancing your tone as desired. A single mic or pair of mics can

Two Notes Torpedo Captor X

"From a build quality point of view, the Waza Air headphones are **absolutely a premium** product..."

be selected per cabinet and moved around and mixed in virtual space using Two Note's dynamic IR technology (including captures of the back of many cabinets too). The Captor X allows users to select from 6 presets via a hardware dial on the front of the unit, but up to 128 presets can be stored and recalled via midi or the remote control software with an unlimited number stored on a mobile device or computer for sharing or backup purposes.

The Captor X's stereo outputs allow for a highly flexible routing system with dual mono or true stereo operation. In Dry/Wet mode the onboard reverb can be routed to one side for monitoring whilst the other channel is left dry for recording or sent to the PA with a hardware 'Space' control on the front panel dialling in the amount of reverb on the wet side. You can also route an unprocessed dry signal with no cabinet or mic simulation to one side for re-amping later in your DAW. In the normal stereo mode you get beautiful stereo reverbs with the width mapped to the same 'space' control, offering up expansive stereo tones or tighter reverbs as required. The reverbs might not quite be up there with the stunning plate reverb on the Ox, but they generally sound excellent and can be tweaked to taste from short room sounds to expansive caverns. The Dual Mono mode offers up a 'Monitoring EQ' on the right channel, allowing users to send a different EQ'd signal to in-ears or wedges on stage for example whilst the un-EQ'd signal goes to front of house.

The truly killer feature however is the stereo Twin Tracker mode, utilising some clever time based DSP effects to simulate the sound of double tracked guitars from a single source. It's possibly the best version of this effect we've ever heard with controls for the tightness and stereo balance of the second guitar part for even more flexibility. As usual, Two Notes also provide their 'Voicing' dial on the front panel, giving users a master 'EQ' for the whole signal chain. This allows you to change the overall sonic characteristic of your amp from a more mid-focussed sound to a scooped, more modern tone.

The Captor X ships with an array of 1x10, 1x12, 2x12, 4x12 and bass cabinets with all manner of mic combinations on »

board, but you also get access to the Two Notes Store via the remote app where the company sell a massive range of cabs covering all possible requirements at a very reasonable price so, combined with the Impulse Response loader, the tonal possibilities of the Captor X are virtually limitless, particularly compared to the Ox which cannot be expanded in any way. It's also worth noting that there is a bass specific EQ and Enhancer in the Captor X, so for anyone doubling on guitar and bass, this represents even further value for money.

In it's price category there is nothing to compete with the Captor X on the market. It achieves many of the same flagship features as products costing more than twice as much and does so in a product a third of the size. Needless to say we are all highly impressed here at GI with this superb device and feel confident in recommending it whole heartedly as the perfect addition to your tube amp collection for recording and live use. It's also worth mentioning that Two Notes will be releasing a 16ohm version of the Captor X in the future – they deserve great success with both units.

END«

HD 25

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SENNHEISER

Xvive U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System

Xvive's U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System in-ear monitor wireless syst providing additional high-quality monitoring. It works brilliantly, no matte band-wide mix. Pair this receiver and transmitter and take your live perfo astounding clarity and reliable wireless architecture, this portable, afforda each and every time. **Tom Quayle** and **Nick Jennison** tell us more.

GOOD monitoring is essential both on the stage and in the studio – ask any musician and they'll tell you that the difference between an okay gig or session and a great one can often be down to the monitoring setup on hand. With stages getting quieter and technological improvements year on year, in-ear monitoring is becoming more and more popular these days, meaning good wireless in-ear monitoring solutions are becoming an essential part of every live and studio musician's toolkit.

In the world of wireless in-ear monitoring people are generally looking for accurate sound, great wireless range, low interference, and long battery life. Traditionally these requirements have come at a steep price point, but the Xvive U4 In-Ear Monitoring Wireless System aims to change that with its superb feature set at an affordable price point.

Most wireless in-ear systems are based on small, pocket-sized receivers paired to a large transmitter base, often half or full sized rack units with delicate, flimsy antennas that are both heavy and awkward to transport. The Xvive U4 offers the most compact wireless IEM system we've ever seen, more akin to some of the wireless microphone or guitar setups on the market. It features a tiny receiver and incredibly compact transmitter that functions as an XLR connector that plugs directly into your chosen output with the wireless transmitter unit attached to the back. Xvive include an XLR to Jack convertor in the package for those that aren't using XLR as their output of choice. It's a very tidy and compact solution but does stick out quite a way from whatever it's plugged into, giving cause for concern if someone were to walk into it, potentially damaging either the transmitter itself or whatever its plugged into. A short extension cable would solve

em is the perfect solution when it comes to
er whether you're using it for an individual or
rmances to the next level! Boasting sound of
able option ensures excellent performance

Xvive U4 Wireless In-Ear Monitoring System

MSRP: (UK) £199 / (US) $229

The Breakdown

Straightforward — Feature-Rich

Specialised — Versatile

Affordable — High-End

Studio — Stage

For fans of

- A good monitoring experience on stage
- The same in the studio
- Reliable gear

For more information, please visit: **xviveaudio.com**

this problem and the compact nature of the setup is certainly very welcome as long as you won't be bumping into it.

Both units are incredibly well built to stand the rigours of gigging or travelling and could be thrown in a gig bag with confidence thanks to all metal construction and drop proof sturdiness with no controls or vital components sticking out from the design or feeling fragile. Operation is very easy with only the necessary controls for channel switching, volume and power plus the ability to switch between Line and Aux levels depending on what you're plugged into.

The U4 is a 2.4Ghz device with 6 wireless channels available. For some users this may be a concern given how crowded

"Both units are **incredibly well built** to stand the rigours of gigging or travelling ..."

the 2.4Ghz space is with consumer devices, but we experienced no drop out or interference issues in a studio environment with multiple smart 2.4Ghz plugs, phones, iPad, computers and various smart enabled devices in the same room. Your mileage may vary of course and if you regularly play in very large venues you may be better off with a higher bandwidth 5Ghz device. For most users the U4's 2.4Ghz operation will more than suffice and offer great stability with the 6 channels on offer.

Xvive U4 Wireless Review - Tom Quayle

Latency and sound quality are superb for such an affordable setup. Xvive quote 5ms of latency for the U4 and our own tests, measuring the figure in a DAW, confirm this figure. The vast majority of users will never be able to feel 5ms of latency given that it's similar to standing a normal distance away from a guitar cab on a large stage and in use this reviewer couldn't detect any feeling of lag even with fast legato runs through an Axe FX unit that has its own inherent analogue to digital conversion latency.

The U4 is a mono monitoring solution with 24bit/48kHz operation for excellent sound quality. Since Xvive doesn't ship a pair of cheap headphones with

Xvive U4 Wireless Review – Nick Jennison

the unit you need to use your own and, paired with a set of custom moulded ACS triple driver in-ear monitors, it's a total pleasure to listen to music, guitar or any other source through the U4. With a dynamic range of 107dB and full range 20Hz-20kHz operation your listening experience isn't compromised in any way and represented accurately, allowing you to play at your best with inspirational sound at all times. If you're wondering why the U4 is mono, remember that most monitoring systems are mono too. Stage wedges, mixer Aux outputs and fills are all mono so it's the most appropriate setup for consistency and means half the bandwidth of a stereo monitoring setup. You need to be sure that your chosen output is setup as a mono sum, but almost all mixers, audio interfaces and guitar modelling units allow you to do this with ease. There is also a great deal of volume on tap should you need it on a loud stage thanks to the headphone driver built into the receiver unit.

Wireless range and battery life are also very good at this price point with over 90ft of range on tap before drops outs (again tested as an accurate claim by us here at GI) and just over 5 hours of battery life from a full charge. Both units feature internal batteries charged via the included double USB micro cable. It's a shame that the more modern and flexible USB-C connector wasn't utilised here and those internal batteries could be a future source of concern if they start to lose charge capacity over time or if you forget to charge the units before a show. But, from a single charge you should have enough juice for a couple of normal gigs or a long studio session – just don't forget to charge them when you get home!

All said and done, the Xvive U4 is a fantastic wireless IEM solution that doesn't break the bank and offers superb sound, build quality and features without much compromise. Those playing really big venues might need to look at higher-end and more expensive 5Ghz solutions, but the average user would do well to check out the superb value proposition that the U4 offers. Highly recommended.

END «

THE Quietroom

At **Guitar Interactive**, we pride ourselves on bringing you in-depth reviews and demonstrations for only the best products the world of guitar and audio electronics has to offer.

If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

WHEN ONLY ACOUSTIC WILL DO

Ibanez AEWC300N

Combining a chic look and a powerful sound, the Ibanez AEWC300N has been making some strong impressions in the nylon-string world since it's release. Featuring a spruce top and maple back and sides that ensures a warm and balanced sound; the AEWC300N also has a cutaway, allowing easier access to the higher frets. **Sam Bell** gives us the full rundown.

IBANEZ is well known for their super strat style guitars, often paving the way of modern guitar technology, from their innovative RG, S and AZ ranges, through to their beautiful Artcore models and extended range instruments. Ibanez has always been the trendsetters. But one thing that often gets overlooked is the quality, playability and value of their acoustic and nylon string ranges of guitar.

In this issue of Guitar Interactive, I brought in my own Ibanez AEWC300N; this guitar has been invaluable in my collection as a professional guitarist. I wanted a quality nylon-string instrument for Recording & Sessions. However, I didn't want to splash out too much. Enter the AEWC300N; this is a guitar packed with quality features, great looks and a very reasonable price tag. I'm not the only Gi contributor with this exact guitar, Fusion Virtuoso Tom Quayle also has this model and loves it just the same!

First off, let's take a look at what this guitar is really made of. The body sports a flamed maple back and sides with a solid spruce top (with a lovely burst finish) and the fingerboard and bridge are made from Laurel. The body has a unique cutaway which moves around the back of the body, allowing free access way above the 12th fret. The guitar is loaded with a Fishman Sonicore pickup in the body which is controlled by the onboard Ibanez AEQ Pre-Amp (Bass, Treble, Volume and Tuner) which is linked up to an XLR or ¼ Inch Jack Output. It looks stunning in the flesh, and sounds fantastic.

The playability, of course, is something else that sold me, Ibanez is known for their Necks, whether it's the classic Wizard Neck for full shred, or the modern AZ neck for a mix of pure comfort, tone and flexibility. The AEWC300N neck is flat radius, with standard nylon string spacing for fingerstyle techniques and the neck is big enough for sustain but thin enough to get your hands around the neck for technical passages and chord voicings. »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Ibanez AEWC300N

MSRP: (UK) £454 / (US) $749

The Breakdown

Traditional — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

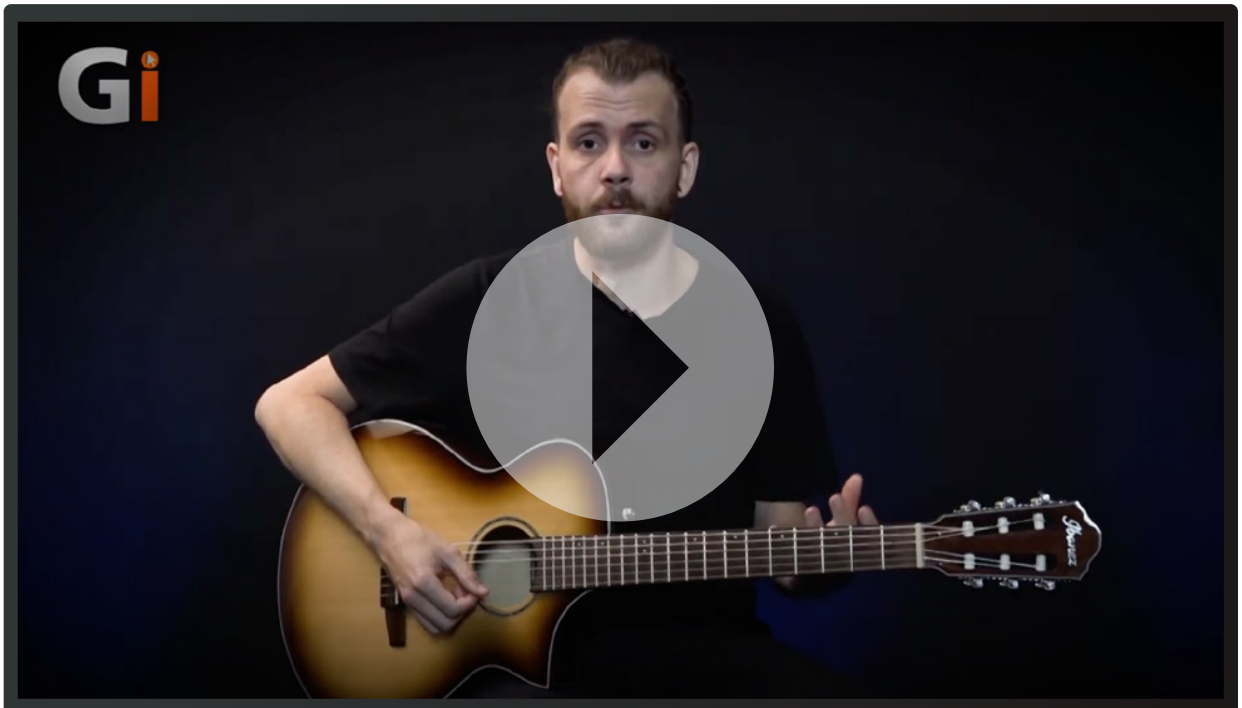
For fans of

- Quality Ibanez Design
- Great playability
- Nylon strung guitars

For more information, please visit:
ibanez.com

If you're finding yourself interested in divining into the world of Nylon String Guitar, I'd seriously consider checking out the AEWC300N. As usual, Ibanez delivers great value for money without sacrificing the quality, sound and appearance of the instrument. I may be biased as I own this guitar, however, for a rough retail price of around £450, (approx) this is a great choice for players looking to have a quality nylon string in their arsenal.

END «



Ibanez AEWC300N

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and sign up today!

Takamine GD20CE

For players seeking a break from the traditional, the GD20CE from Takamine combines a solid cedar top with mahogany back and sides to produce a warm, detailed tone that works beautifully for a wide range of musical styles. The slim satin-finish mahogany neck and 12" radius ovangkol fingerboard provide great feel and playability, while the onboard Takamine TP-4TD preamp system gives you a built-in tuner with three-band EQ and gain controls for excellent amplified performance and versatility. Here's **Nick Jennison** to tell us more.

WHO doesn't love a dreadnought? Whether you're a singer songwriter looking for a powerful and authoritative guitar to accompany yourself with, a recording guitarist looking for a solid all round acoustic or a hobbyist looking for your first acoustic guitar, you can't go wrong with a dread...and it seems like just about every manufacturer has their own take on it.

Takamine's GD20C all-round fine example of their elegant and refined-looking cutaway dreadnought body shape, but with some unusual wood choices to set it apart from the spruce-topped crowd. Notably, it sports an ovangkol fretboard and a solid cedar top.

Cedar, for the uninitiated, is more commonly used as a top wood for classical guitars. Compared to spruce, it's a warmer and more "seasoned" sounding wood with a lot less upper-midrange bite and more of a silky and extended top end. As a rule, cedar doesn't do as well when played hard when compared to spruce, but the complex overtones sound beautiful with a more delicate touch.

That's definitely the case here. Affordable dreadnoughts tend to be quite un-subtle affairs made to be pounded on, but the GD20CE really shines with fingerpicking, hybrid picking and more measured flatpicking styles. That said, there's enough weight and midrange from the mahogany body for strumming too. There's a really nice balance of detail and power on display here for what is a very affordable guitar.

aOut of the box, the setup is rather stiff with quite a high action - the sort of setup that works well for a guitar that's designed to be played very aggressively, but it's a little at odds with the subtle and complex tones this guitar has to offer. That said, lowering the action is a relatively simple procedure that any competent tech can accomplish, and the synthetic bone saddle will make this process even simpler. »

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Takamine GD20CE

MSRP: (UK) £395 / (US) $489

The Breakdown

Traditional — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Guitar innovation.
- Fast acoustic necks.
- A Martin for a great price.

For more information, please visit:
takamine.com

The built-in preamp is full-featured and easy to use, with a three-band parametric EQ and a clear and accurate tuner, which is a very nice addition. I'm not a huge fan of giving the guitarist this level of EQ control on their guitar, but as long as you're fairly conservative with the sliders you'll get a really pleasant and natural tone when plugged in - it's a really nice sounding system.

The Takamine GD20CE is a much more versatile and sonically complex take on an affordable dreadnought. The spruce top gives it a level of complexity and detail that's quite rare for this kind of guitar, especially at this price range. Even factoring in the cost of a pro setup, you're getting a really nice guitar for the money.

END «

Takamine GD20CE

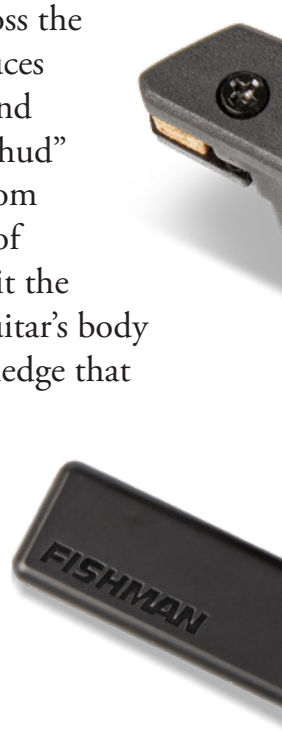
Fishman PowerTap Acoustic

Earlier this year, Fishman unveiled the all-new PowerTap Earth and PowerTap Infinity pickup system for acoustic guitars. Featuring the new Tap body sensor, that when combined with either a Matrix Infinity (PowerTap Infinity) or Rare Earth (PowerTap Earth) pickup, opens up a new palette of sounds, interaction, and colour for players of all styles. **Nick Jennison** tells us more.

IF like me, you've been playing the guitar for a long time now, you may remember electro-acoustic guitars from the 90s and 2000s. While there are undoubtedly tons of some superb instruments from that era, the pickups from that era can leave a lot to be desired. Most of them were quacky, excessively dynamic, lacked sustain, had a very bizarre frequency response and were generally an unpleasant necessity that gigging guitarists had to endure rather than enjoy.

Technology has advanced by a frightening amount since those days. Modern acoustic pickups are everything their forebears weren't: they feel natural, preserve your playing dynamics and touch and they sound fantastic… for most things. If you're playing the strings of the guitar, you're golden. But if you're playing percussive parts on the guitar's body, even the best pickup system will leave you wanting.

Fishman to the rescue. Their new Powertap systems combine some of their most popular pickups with their new Tap body sensor - a contact pickup specifically tuned for percussive playing. Now, soundboard transducers have been around a while, but they don't always work that well (or sound that great). The new Tap pickup, by contrast, is fantastic. It has an even dynamic response all across the guitar's soundboard and produces an authoritative and tonal sound that's a far cry from the dull "thud" you may be used to hearing from a contact pickup. The upshot of this is that you can fully exploit the whole range of sounds your guitar's body can produce, safe in the knowledge that Powertap will reliably put out what you're putting in. It's also incredibly resistant to feedback, especially the low howling "whale noises" that can plague some contact pickups. »



Pickup Series

"Powertap Earth is very warm with a smooth treble response and along sustain, and installs **without any drilling** or having to pull your bridge saddle out...."

RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Fishman PowerTap Acoustic Pickup Series

MSRP: (Earth) £229 / (Infinity) £229

The Breakdown

Traditional — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Warm, transparent sound
- Ease of use
- Gear that inspires

For more information, please visit: **fishman.com**

Each of the two Powertap systems pairs the Tap sensor with one of Fishman's most popular pickups: the Powertap Infinity system incorporates their Matrix Infinity under-saddle pickup, and the Powertap Earth uses their soundhole-mounted Rare Earth Humbucker. As we've come to expect from Fishman, both systems sound excellent, but there are differences in performance between the two. Powertap Earth is very warm with a smooth treble response and along sustain, and installs without any drilling or having to pull your bridge saddle out. Powertap Infinity has more top-end sparkle baked in, along with a tone control that scoops the mid-range as it boosts the lows and highs for more of a "modern" sound. It also has a "voicing" switch for more low end, which is great for filling a room when playing unaccompanied.

Both systems offer the same clever routing options. The jack socket automatically senses whether you're using a mono or stereo jack, and changes the output accordingly. With a mono cable, the blend control adjusts the balance between the

Fishman PowerTap Acoustic Pickup Series

Tap pickup and the Matrix Infinity/Rare Earth pickup. Things get really interesting when you connect a stereo jack though, which routes each pickup to its own output, allowing you to apply different EQ and effects to each pickup. It also allows your sound engineer to balance the two out front for the perfect live sound.

Fishman's Powertap systems are as far beyond the previous generation of contact pickups as their regular pickup systems are beyond the piezo systems of 30 years ago. They reproduce your percussive playing with accuracy and authority while still sounding superb for more conventional styles. If you're into percussive playing, you need to check these systems out.

END «

THE Bassment

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If it's in Gi, then it's gear we'd buy! All of our written reviews and breakdowns are accompanied by a detailed video – so you can see and hear for yourself if it's right for you.

THE PLACE FOR BASS

CORT ARTISAN A4 ULTRA BASS

The new A5 Plus SCMS is Cort's bold foray into innovative modern bass concepts such as a for enhanced body-neck balance and multi-scale for a longer scale length on the bass strin 35.5") to shorter scale length on the treble strings (to 34"). The result is a state-of-the-art bass discriminating musician. **Dan Veall** tells us more.

ANSWERING the demand for a Single-Cut design instrument, Cort has already brought us the Artisan Series A5 MSSC, a multi-scale five-string bass with a fan-fret design neck. This brand new model that I have in for review brings the same stylish single-cut outline to a parallel fret version.

Let's get into the details.

First up, the Cort A5 is a neck-through, meaning the tuning keys, nut and bridge are all anchored to the same multi-laminate of Maple and Panga Panga in a five-piece sandwich. On to that central structure are a pair of swamp ash wings with a beautiful grain, neatly mated. The small details of the newest A5 Plus are well worth the mention too: A pinstripe of what I believe to be walnut separates the sections of lighter body wood, which looks so good. The carving work to sculpt out the back of the heel and in to the upper horn area is deep and luxurious for a bass at this price point.

Rolling the body over, attention is turned wood, an amber stained open-pore finish an eye-catching look to a select piece of P Each piece will look different too owing t ness of grain from top to top. Once again, framed with a dual pinstripe around its pe

24 frets line up neatly down the Panga Pa a wood that is said to have tonal qualities similar looks to Wenge. It's a 34" scale (str from nut to saddle) and we are enjoying a this model. For me, a nice feel right across edge, noting no sharp or rough unfinished example.

Our hardware offering comes in the form ultra-light weight open gear tuning keys. with a small headstock offers a well balanc ing position with no signs that the bass wa south in my video. The bridge is a Hipsho variety. It's big and chunky and offers strin body mounting. »

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RECOMMENDED PRODUCT

Cort Artisan Series A5 Plus Single-Cut

MSRP: (UK) £899 / (US) $TBC

The Breakdown

Vintage — Modern

Specialised — Versatile

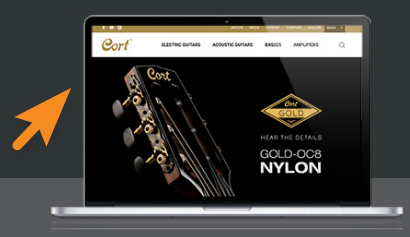
Warm — Bright

Affordable — High-end

For fans of

- Modern design and feel
- Neck-through body
- Multi-Scale Bass Guitars

For more information, please visit:
cortguitars.com



"This modern styled instrument **isn't going to run short** if you are playing prog or gospel chops alike...".

Cort Artisan A4 Ultra Bass

There's a wide range of amplifier tones available from the A5 Plus SC featuring two Bartolini MK-1 passive soap bar pickups that are harnessed to Bartolini's matching Mk-1 preamplifier circuit. The three band unit offers cut and boost for bass, mid and treble frequency ranges. The mid control on this circuit really does seem to highlight the tone of the instrument and every time in my demo' I wanted to push the mids up from their zero centre-clicked position on the dial. In my "lockdown studio" I found that the bass control added some lovely depth but conversely I felt that I left the treble control alone as to maintain some warmth in the overall delivery. The Low B has a good depth to it and in my preferred picking position between the pickups offered ample bite to carry through a mix.

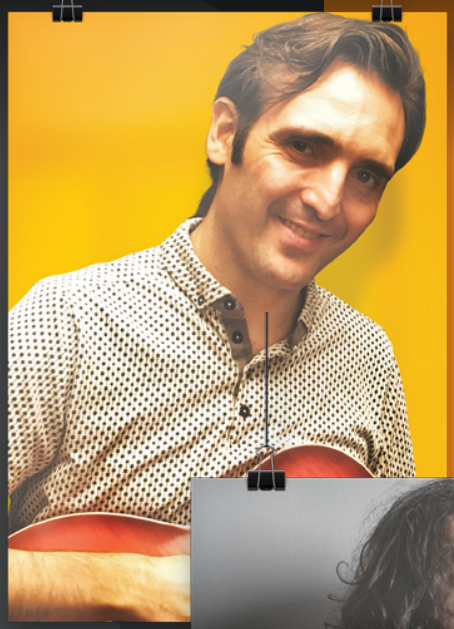
So let me see, who is the instrument aimed at? The "for fans of" section: Well, I suspect if you are in a period-correct tribute band or prefer things to be very-metal-black, then I'm going to go out on a limb and say you'll be looking elsewhere. I've seen Cort basses in a massively wide range of genres though, and this modern styled instrument isn't going to run short if you are playing prog or gospel chops alike. It also fits into an affordable price bracket looking at the feature set. Or to put it another way, "value for money". Tonally, the wood choices would have you believe this bass should be clear and bright but I hope you can hear that it's easy to tease warmth and bottom out of it too. A great balance.

END «

THE Columns

Inside each and every issue, we have a host of exclusive lessons – with our team of **world-class contributors** offering their unique insight, knowledge and expertise to help you get the most out of your own playing.

CLASS IS BACK IN SESSION



SILENT RECORDING HACK

using your Victory amp!

GUITAR AMPLIFIERS
HAND BUILT IN ENGLAND

We've all faced this dilemma at some point: you have a killer valve amp that you just love, and you want to record with it. But it's loud - really loud! You could mic up the cab and record the traditional way, but you're certain your neighbours will be at your door pitchforks in hand before you can figure out the sweet spot for the mic. »

YOU could buy a load box (like a Two Notes Captor, or my personal favourite, a Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander), but they're expensive and besides, you want to record RIGHT NOW! Well, here's a simple little hack that just needs your amp, an audio interface, some free software and a cable.

We're going to call this the "FX send recording hack", and it's exactly as simple as it sounds: take your amp's FX send (which every Victory amp has) and plug it straight into your audio interface. Load up your favourite IR (more on that in a moment) and you're good to go!

HOW IT WORKS:

Your amp is made up of two parts: a preamp and a power amp. The preamp is where all the tone comes from - especially if you're using amp gain. The power amp does add a little "colour", but it mainly just makes things louder. But we don't want "loud", we just want the tone.

Luckily, your amp's FX loop comes directly between the preamp and the power amp. The signal from the preamp comes out of the FX send, and whatever you plug into the FX return gets fed straight into the power amp. So if you take the FX send and plug it into your interface, what you're actually doing is taking a direct send from your amp's tone-generating preamp.

BEFORE YOU START:

Be sure that your amp is plugged into a speaker if you're going to try this, otherwise you might just blow up your amp! You can turn the master volume all the way down if you want silent recording - on Victory amps, the master volume comes after the FX loop, so it won't affect the level coming out of the FX return. Alternatively, you can sneak the master volume up to bedroom level if you want to hear your guitar through your own cab while you record.

I should also point out that you can use any pedals you want with this setup! Pedals you'd normally run in front of the amp can be used exactly the same way, and any pedals you'd normally run in the amp's FX loop can be plugged in between the FX send and your audio interface.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE IR:

Because we're not running through a speaker cab, it's very important that we simulate the way a cab sounds of we want our guitar to sound "right". Guitar speakers filter out a lot of the nastier high end information that all guitar preamps produce, and this will stop our newly recorded preamp tone sounding like a bag of wasps.

There are tonnes of IRs to choose from, but I've decided to use Celestion's excellent (and free!) Cenzo Townshend V30 Mix. You'll need to load the IR using a plugin, and for this I've used the equally excellent and equally free Poulin LeCab2.

POWER AMP TONE:

Now, you may be perfectly happy with the results of recording with just an IR, but if the results are just a lad on the thin side, you can use some poweramp modelling software to fill in the missing puzzle piece. I used TwoNotes outstanding Wall Of Sound plugin, but Ignite amps make a fantastic free alternative in their TPA-1 plugin. Insert this before your IR plugin and tweak to taste. If you're at all worried about how authentic these poweramp simulations sound, be sure to check out the section of the video for this lesson where I compare this method to my Super Kraken's actual power amp, captured using a Boss Waza Tube Amp Expander - you'll be pretty hard pressed to tell them apart.

So there you have it! A method for recording with your amp that won't cost you a penny and won't upset the neighbours. I've used this method countless times myself with great results, and hopefully it'll help you produce some great sounding music.

GUITAR AMPLIFIERS
HAND BUILT IN ENGLAND

Links

Celestion Cenzo Townshend IR:

www.celestionplus.com/free-download/

TwoNotes Wall Of Sound:

www.two-notes.com/wall-of-sound

Poulin LeCab2:

https://vst4free.com/plugin/958/

Ignite Amps TPA-1:

www.kvraudio.com/product/tpa-1-by-ignite-amps

Nick Jennison Silent Recording Hack

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Giorgio Serci

CREATIVE FINGERSTYLE

Giorgio Serci, award winning guitarist, composer, arranger and long-time guitar tutor at The Academy of Contemporary Music, continues his acoustic column in this issue of Guitar Interactive Magazine.

HELLO there and welcome to this edition of Creative Fingerstyle.

In this column I would like to share a composition of mine called 'A Walk In The Park', another bespoke composition for the Guitar Interactive community.

Any of you who have been following my previous columns would know that I normally use a Yamaha classical guitar for these fingerstyle sessions, which is my favourite guitar for nylon string recordings.

I thought it would be useful to do a few fingerstyle columns on an archtop guitar, to stimulate the GI readers/viewers' appetite in this wonderful area.

This piece was specifically written for this lovely archtop guitar made by Fibonacci, a formidable instrument that makes you want to play non-stop thanks to its tone quality, sustain and general feel.

Let's look at the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic content of 'A Walk In The Park'.

MELODIC AND HARMONIC INGREDIENTS:

The piece starts with a ii V I consisting of Dm7, G13 and Cmaj9 navigated with a C major scale, including a passing note (Eb = b13th of G), which links chromatically E and D.

Next, I have used an A7b9, which supports a phrase from D harmonic minor (A Phrygian dominant).

Following this, I explored a harmonic device, which creates a tension and release effect between Dm and G7. Normally, in this context G7 can be approached with an Ab7 as a tritone substitution of D7 (V of the V chord). However, I have used a Bb/Ab instead, which although it has a similar role, it includes a Bb which produces another mild dissonance that resolves well with the B natural present in G7 and followed by a Cmaj13.

Next, is a minor ii V i, consisting of Bm7b5, E alt, Am9, F#m7b5, F9, E7#9 (which both share the top G note), resolving on an A minor and AminMaj9, to finish with.

Here are the chords utilized in the piece, described in a concise manner, omitting passing notes.

Dm7 G7 (G7b13)	Cmaj9 A7b9	Dm Bb/Ab G7	Cmaj13
Bm7b5 E7alt	Am9 F#m7b5	F9 E7Alt	Am
Am/ma9			

RHYTHMIC INGREDIENTS:

The piece features a recurrent use of swung 8th notes and occasionally 8th notes triplets.

As always, I would like to recommend exploring the above-mentioned techniques in order to compose your own pieces. We have to allow ourselves to make mistakes and reflect on the reasons why we like or not a particular sound, a chord progression or modulation. Eventually, these sounds will become part of your musical lexicon and you'll be able to use these with fluidity and effectiveness.

The picking-hand pattern is predominantly as follows:

(Please note E=low E string, e= high E string)

'p' focuses predominantly on the bass lines, while 'i, m, a' play the melody and countermelody or harmony part. The melody is predominantly played with the 'a' finger, so it is important to use the appropriate velocity for the note to cut through.

Play this part in a relaxed and clear manner, making sure your thumb is a little forward compared to the 'i, m, a' fingers, in order to prevent it from colliding with the 'i' finger.

As always, focus on attack and tonal consistency. The melody and the supporting harmonies will be played with the 'a' finger, so more attack is needed to outline the melody.

Next we are going to look at the fretting hand part:

Bar 1: Little f on fret 5 and 6 of B, with middle f on fret 5 of A, index on fret 3 of D and ring f on fret 5 of G. Barre' on fret 3 of E and D. Middle f on fret 4 of G and little f on fret 5 and 4 of B, as a passing note on the + of 4.

Bar 2: Middle f on fret 3 of A, index on fret 2 of D and G with ring f on fret 3 of

Giorgio Serci - 'A Walk In The Park'

B. Next, open A, little f on fret 5 of D, middle f on fret 3 of G and index on fret 2 of B. Next, descending melody with middle f on fret 3 of G, index on fret 2 of G and open G.

Bar 3: Little f on fret 5 of A, middle f on fret 3 of D and index on fret 2 of G. Index on fret 3 of D and G with middle f on fret 4 of E. Next, barre' on fret 3 of E, D with ring f on fret 4 of G, followed with little f on fret 5 of B and middle f on fret 2 of G, followed by an arpeggiated chord.

Bar 4: Ring f on fret 3 of A, index on fret 2 of D, middle f on fret 2 of G and open B.

Bar 5: Barre' on fret 2 of A, G and B, with middle f on fret 3 of D and ring f on fret 3 of B. Play C# with the index on fret 2 of B and D with ring f on fret 3 of B. Next, same up three frets with open E on bass.

Bar 6: Open A, middle f on fret 10 of D, index on fret 9 of G, little f on fret 12 of B. Next, middle f on fret 10, index on fret 9 and again middle f on fret 10 of B.

Bar 7: Index on fret 8 of 'e', middle f on fret 9 of A, ring f on fret 9 of G and little f on fret 10 of B.

Bar 8: Middle f on fret 8 of A, index on fret 7 of D, ring f on fret 8 of G and little f on fret 8 of B. Next, open E, index on fret 6 of D, middle f on fret 7 of G and little f on fret 8 of B.

Bar 9: Open A, index on fret 4 of D, ring f on fret 5 of G, B and e. Index on fret 6 of A and middle f on fret 7 of A, followed by open A.

Bar 10: Open A, little f on fret 10 of D, middle f on fret 9 of G, ring f on fret 9 of B and index on fret 7 of e.

Congratulations, you have completed 'A Walk in the Park'

As always, you will be able to download a transcription by selecting the menu option in this page.

I strongly recommend experimenting with a few picking variations, changing the chords as you wish in terms of voicing (higher or lower), as well as trying the same picking pattern on a different chord progression, or using a 'capo' on fret 2 for a brighter outcome.

When repeating any section twice or more, you may want to play 'sul ponticello', (closer to the bridge) or 'sul tasto' (over the frets) for more contrasting results.

Make sure you highlight the melody (singing is a great strategy to play the melody in more assertive and singing-like manner)

Focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help delivering the piece in a more accurate and consistent manner, while saving energy.

This will complete this creative fingerstyle lesson.

I hope you will enjoy playing this study piece and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions. If you would like to listen any more of my compositions, please check the previous issues of Guitar Interactive Magazine as well as any of my CDs, available from my website:

Check me out here at
www.giorgioserci.com

You can also find me on instagram on giorgio_serci or twitter @giorgioserci as well as on facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic

Until the next time - Good-bye.

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CREATING **DRUM GROOVES** ON ACOUSTIC GUITAR

Part of the reason we love acoustic guitar is that it sound great all on it's own. Because of this, it's become the default "band replacement" for singers and songwriters the world over, and even spawned a genre that bears it's name - "acoustic" gigs, "acoustic" albums...

WHILE the piano may be the king of the chords thanks to it's gargantuan range, and electric guitars might be more vocal and sustaining, acoustic guitars have one thing over both of them: percussion. The clack of strummed strings is crucial part of Nashville sessions, solo singer-songwriters and buskers on the high street, because it taps into the most primal element of music: rhythm.

But there's much more to percussion on acoustic guitar than just strumming. From "More Than Words" slaps, to the rich flamenco tradition, right up to the modern virtuosic stylings of Andy McKee, Kaki King and Mike Dawes, your acoustic guitar is a veritable percussive machine. But where to begin? Well, how about we take inspiration from the most popular percussive instrument of our age, the drum kit. In rock, pop, soul and most contemporary styles, the two most important elements of the drum kit are the kick drum and the snare drum. Let's start there.

KICK DRUM:

There are a few ways to get a kick drum sound out of an acoustic guitar, but my favourite is a technique we're going to borrow from flamenco guitar called a golpe (from the Spanish word for knock). It involves

forcefully tapping the ring finger of the right hand onto the body of the guitar. Ideally you'll want a pickguard or "golpeador" if you don't want your guitar to end up looking like Willie Nelson's.

The beauty of this technique is that it leaves your index finger and thumb free to strum at the same time, meaning you don't need to interrupt your chords and melodies to add some low end thump.

SNARE DRUM:

The snare drum gets it's characteristic snap and rattle from the wires (snares) that rest against it's bottom head. When you strike the drum, the snares rattle

Creating Drum Grooves On Acoustic Guitar

against the bottom head and create a high pitched crack, and we can achieve a similar effect with the guitar strings themselves. You can slap your whole palm against all six strings, or us ether nails of your right hand for a similar effect, but my favourite way to achieve this is with a thumb slap against the wound strings, similar to John Mayer's percussive slaps in "Stop This Train". You don't really need much more than your thumb against a couple of strings to create the desired effect, and it leaves your other fingers free for strumming and picking.

A SIMPLE RHYTHM:

There's perhaps no better example of a drum beat that isn't actually drums than Queen's 1977 hit "We Will Rock You". The iconic "boom boom BAP" rhythm is actually the sound of stamping feet and clapping hands, but it's a great example of how kick and snare drums are typically played in contemporary music, with the kick drum playing on and around beats 1 and 3 and the snare providing a "backbeat" on beats 2 and 4. Try emulating this by playing "golpe golpe SLAP" in the same rhythm.

INCORPORATING STRUMS:

When you're happy with keeping a simple groove, it's time to start incorporating strums alongside your percussive playing. For the golpe, you can use either your thumb or index finger to strum a chord at the same time as you strike. This takes a bit of getting used to, but the rhythmic possibilities it opens up makes it well worth the effort.

The same is true for the thumb slap we're using for snare drum sounds - you can use your index finger to strum at the same time as you slap, or pick with any combination of right hand fingers.

TOM FILLS:

Tom Toms (usually shortened to just "Toms") are the other drums typically found on a modern drum kit. They don't have snares, so for our purposes we can think of them as small, higher pitched kick drums. Try using the same golpe technique we used to emulate a kick drum, but in different places on your guitar's top. You'll quickly find spots that are higher pitched, and one of my personal favourites is the spot just above the soundhole on the bass string side. This means you'll have to use your thumb for the strike, and that's perfectly fine.

That's an overview of how to create the key sounds of a drum kit on your acoustic guitar, and in the next lesson we'll take a look at arranging parts that incorporate both a drum groove and guitar chords. Until then, have a play around with these techniques and see what you can create! Have fun!

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